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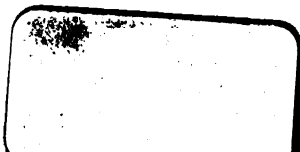
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OLD TRINITY

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

BY T. MASON JONES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET;

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1867.

250. O. 250.

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET,
AND CHARING CROSS.

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OLD TRINITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE BARONET AND HIS FRIEND.

SIR BERNARD CAREW, Bart., and his companion Captain Flood, were engaged in earnest, almost angry conversation, as they sat over their brandy-and-water in the smoking-room at Hare Court, in the county Limerick. 'Do you mean to tell me,' said the captain, 'that you intend, after all I have said, to propose for this girl O'Neill?'

'I tell you again,' answered the baronet sharply, 'that I have proposed for her. I wrote to her uncle Sir Arthur yesterday. There,' he continued, as he flung the letter on

the table, 'is his answer. He is to meet me to-morrow at the lower Gap, and talk the subject over. You can see, from the tone of his reply, that he is not averse to the proposal.'

'If he is not,' replied Captain Flood, 'I am. It shan't be. I forbid the banns.'

'But I tell you it shall be,' retorted Sir Bernard. 'It is my affair, not yours.'

'Good Heavens!' cried Flood. 'Is the man insane? Have you forgotten that it's a transportable affair? Eh, have you thought of that?'

'I have not forgotten it. I have counted all the chances; and I will take the risk.'

'That's more than I will. I give you fair notice that if you stir hand or foot in this thing, you'll do so without my assistance. Expect no aid from me. I'll wash my hands of you. See if I don't;' and the captain struck the table with his clenched fist emphatically.

'My good fellow,' said Sir Bernard coolly, as he lit a fresh cigar, 'you'll do just as I please

in the matter. I'll be the principal, you'll only be an accessory.'

'I tell you once more,' Flood interrupted, 'I'll not be an accessory either before or after the fact. Nay more, I'll prevent it.'

'You will do nothing of the kind. I was going to say,' continued Sir Bernard, 'when you interrupted me, that we are both in the same boat. If I am in your power, you are in mine. So far we are equal. You will help me to marry this girl. I do not pay you for nothing, do I?'

'No,' grinned the captain. 'And it's because you do pay me for something that I intend to keep you paying me. A poor devil like me, who has been knocking about the world all his lifetime, and living on his wits, knows when he gets into good quarters like these, and can appreciate them. I prefer your society in Hare Court, with all its advantages, to being your companion in a convict prison, or sharing your bunk on the voyage to Botany Bay. No, no. Watty Flood knows when he is comfortable, and means to keep so.'

‘You speak offensively,’ rejoined Sir Bernard. ‘Besides, you exaggerate the danger. What great risk do we run ? I see none.’

‘But what if they should hear of it ?’ Flood inquired.

‘Pooh ! they are not very likely to hear of it five or six thousand miles away. Even if they do, money can arrange all that. I shall leave them in your hands. You can manage them as you did before. You shall have unlimited powers, and a handsome bonus for yourself.’

‘Ah,’ replied the captain, ‘it was an easy matter then. Your father was living, and gave you a scanty allowance. You were only a Chevalier d’industrie :—a poor black-leg like myself, and except what you could raise on post-obits, which soon went, hadn’t a shilling to bless yourself with. Now it is different. You are Sir Bernard Carew, Bart., the possessor of the finest estate in the county. They will soon find that out.’

‘I don’t see how they can hear of it unless you tell them,’ said Sir Bernard, angrily.

‘Me! why should I tell them? It’s not my interest to do so, or very likely I would. I have a rich quarry in you. And I don’t want to share my pickings with anyone,’ the captain replied, with more candour than sound policy would have dictated.

Carew felt that he was in this man’s power, yet he did not like to be taunted by him with the fact. However, he restrained his rising anger, as he answered, ‘You are again offensive in your remarks. Be good enough not to speak in that way.’

‘Very good,’ rejoined the captain, with a mocking laugh, ‘I will improve my manners. And now let us return to business: why the deuce, with these dangers of discovery hanging over you, do you wish to increase your peril by marrying the fair O’Neill? Then there is the other matter, still more serious.’

‘I don’t want to hear about that,’ Sir Bernard broke in, testily. ‘You are always bringing up unpleasant subjects that ought to be forgotten. Drop them, I say.’

‘I am willing; but I fear they won’t drop us. Why do you want to marry this girl?’ the captain again inquired.

‘She has between six or eight thousand a year in her own right. Old Carter, the attorney, told me the other day that she has over sixty thousand pounds in the funds. I may as well secure it; for if this infernal lawsuit with old L’Estrange goes against me, the Cranagh estates are lost; besides, no one knows what amount in costs, as the case has been in Chancery for years. And you know what a hole these accursed Jews are making in the present rental.’

‘I do. It would be a prudent thing if there were no barrier in the way,’ Flood said.

‘Then,’ Sir Bernard went on, ‘she belongs to one of the oldest and best families in Ireland. A marriage with her would silence rumour, if any rumours were heard. Even if it came to the worst, what could she do if I were her husband?’

‘What, indeed!’ Flood re-echoed.

‘And I confess I like the girl; she takes my fancy more than any one I have seen for a long time,’ the baronet added.

‘I don’t wonder,’ Flood answered; ‘she has all the points—blood, breeding, beauty, good carriage, walks and rides well, dances superbly, and, I hear, is a musician. I don’t fancy she cares much for you, though.’ This last sentence was uttered with a drawl.

‘What reason have you to think that?’ Sir Bernard asked, quickly.

‘Because she refused twice to dance with you at the last county ball. I was watching her all the time. She didn’t look particularly amiable at you, either,’ Flood answered.

‘Pon my word, I am quite obliged for the notice you take of my affairs. I wish you would mind your own in future,’ sneered Sir Bernard.

‘I fancy she is sweet on young L’Estrange,’ Flood continued, without taking notice of Sir Bernard’s last remark. ‘She danced twice with him. He took her into supper, too.

By-the-by, what relation is L'Estrange to your opponent in the lawsuit—son or nephew ?

‘Nephew. Confound him ! I hate all those L'Estranges,’ was the baronet's reply.

‘You were intimate with an O'Neill, a cousin of this girl's, at Oxford, were you not ?’

‘Yes. Why do you ask ?’

‘Because I was thinking perhaps he told her of some of your vagaries there. Was he in any of your serious secrets ; or was he merely a gull ?’

‘He knew nothing particular. I only let him in for a trifle now and then. No ; I don't think he suspects anything ; at least, I hope not.’ Sir Bernard replied. ‘Nothing, however, that he could tell would make her think less of me. Women don't like a spooney.’

‘What will you do if she won't have you ?’

‘Make her,’ was the laconic rejoinder.

‘Make her ! How will you manage that ?’ the captain asked.

‘Some evening when she is out riding or driving alone, meet her with a dozen sturdy

fellows under your command; carry her off to the shooting-lodge in the mountains; it's only a couple of hours' drive; have your friend Wilson there to tie the knot; you, as best man, and reliable witness of whatever it may be necessary to swear. Then, when all was over, what could she do but make the best of it?' And the baronet, having sketched his programme, looked at Flood triumphantly.

'I say, Carew, what a dare-devil you are! the captain remarked, surprised into admiration of Sir Bernard's audacity. 'Nothing seems to daunt you. I always thought I was a cool hand myself, but, by my faith, you beat me hollow. I willingly yield the palm. You are a top-sawyer, and no mistake.'

'I flatter myself that will be the proper way to overcome the young lady's dislikes, or scruples, if she should have any, which I don't expect,' the baronet replied, not too well pleased at his companion's questionable praise.

'True; but you must not reckon too con-

fidently on my compliance with your plans. You can afford, in one sense, to be reckless of your own safety, because you have the prize to win, others must be more cautious who have no prize to gain, but everything to lose. I don't mean to risk my neck, I assure you,' the captain added, 'without an adequate consideration.'

Carew was either so elated with the prospective triumph of his plans, or he had taken too much brandy-and-water, or he forgot for a moment the hold this man had over him, or he was galled by his familiar manner which always annoyed him, for he answered haughtily, 'You shall risk your neck or not just as I please, Flood, nor does it matter much what becomes of you or it.'

'It would not matter much to you, but a great deal to me,' growled the gallant captain, savagely between his teeth.

'You had better then not set yourself to oppose my wishes in future,' said Carew. 'I don't want you to be trying the mastery dodge

over me any more. It won't do;' and as he spoke, his cheek flushed and a lurid light gleamed in his angry eyes. This was not the first time that the baronet had tried to escape from the thralldom in which Flood held him, but in vain; chafe as he might against his fetters they only galled him the more. Every succeeding struggle gave his tyrant a stronger consciousness of mastery, and made him feel the more bitterly his own utter helplessness, and so it was on this occasion. The captain quietly smoked his cigar and allowed his victim to rage and fume.

'My dear Carew,' he said, and his manner was more insolent and familiar than before, 'what's the use of your being angry? you only put yourself out. Don't look so black at me, pray don't. It does no good. I see you hate me. You know you do. It would be strange if you didn't. There's murder in your eye this moment. You wouldn't feel the slightest compunction in sending a bullet through me, or giving me a dose of strychnine,

or flinging me into the river, or putting an end to me in any way, only you know it wouldn't pay. I am a brave man to live with you.

'If any thing happens to me, I have left instructions to have the cause and mode of my death rigidly investigated. Any foul play on your part would simply bring you to the gallows; and, audacious as you are, you would not like that. Hanging is even worse than transportation. Your secret, or rather secrets, would pass into the knowledge of other parties, who might not treat you as indulgently as I have done. So that, even in a pecuniary sense, you would be a loser by my death. I have no wish to press heavily on you. I am sure I have been moderate in my demands. And, if you think I am in your way, give me an annuity of a couple of thousand a year, and I will go away and never trouble you again.'

Here Sir Bernard interrupted the speaker with some terrible imprecations.

'Ah! there you are again,' continued the imperturbable captain; 'you flare up like gun-

powder, and are so unreasonable. Why can't you be calm, like me ?'

'Because you drive me wild with your taunts and exactions. You have fleeced me pretty well already : robbed me right and left. Just think of the thousands you have had of me up to the present, and now you talk of two thousand a-year. I'd see you d——d first !'

'Gently, gently. Never get into a passion. There I have the advantage of you. If I have taken a few thousands from you, have I not earned them ? Be just. Have I not increased your rent-roll ? It was by my advice you cleared off the seething masses of pauperism that were on your estate, turned small farms into large ones, and thereby increased your income from ten to fifteen per cent. ; will you deny that ?'

'I don't want to deny it. But it was an accursed chance that placed me in your power. I often wish I was dead,' Sir Bernard groaned.

'A most blessed chance for me,' chuckled the captain. 'I shall never forget that night

crossing to Havre. How poor and miserable and sick I was! Begad, I should have been thankful to anyone that flung me overboard; I was so tired of my wretched life. I had played my last card, and lost. I give you my solemn word of honour, I saw nothing for it but to turn billiard marker; and, as the wretched tub of a boat tumbled about in the sea, I never dreamed of the splendid slice of luck that was to fall to me before she reached the French shore. I have been in clover ever since.'

'Why will you torture me with these memories?' Sir Bernard exclaimed, with fury. 'You have done nothing of late but talk of prisons, and docks, and felony, and sometimes I fear the servants will hear your d——d tongue. Be warned, I tell you again, and hold it. You have a desperate man to deal with. I feel in a dangerous mood to-night;' and he rose from his chair and looked furiously across the table at Flood.

'Dangerous! Not a bit of it,' the latter

retorted, as he half filled his glass from the decanter. 'You are far too prudent a man, far too wise now, to attempt anything dangerous with me. You know how you stand, and I know it.'

The baronet's anger subsided in a moment. Flood, he felt, was right. He was in the toils, and could not escape. What was the use of resisting? And as he asked himself the question, Sir Bernard sat down again, gnawing his lip and stroking his red, flowing beard.

Flood watched him a moment, curiously, and then resumed: 'I have been speculating how so clever a man as you are, Carew—for you are clever—and so daring and determined, could have been such an ass as to commit yourself in the way you did, and place yourself in my power or any other man's. A nice game you played. You held splendid cards, and threw them all away. What a precious fool you made of yourself! You are wiser now.'

'Don't talk of it,' cried Carew, starting up

again. 'I was blind and drunk, and mad and desperate. I wish I had cut my throat at the time.'

'Very fortunate for yourself you didn't, and very fortunate for me,' rejoined the captain, who looked at everything as it affected his own selfish interests. 'And now, Carew,' he continued, 'before we separate, I have a word or two to say to you. Let us clearly understand each other. I have not broken my part of the compact; you have broken yours. I have ² been perfectly respectful and deferential to you before your friends, and your servants. You have humbled me before them. You have been restive and testy with me of late. As Sullivan tamed the horses, by whispering in their ears, so I have told you a few things to-night, just to bring you to your senses. You must change your demeanour. Let me have no more of your airs and insolence. Remember, that if you are master here, I am your master. You must treat me with proper respect, as your friend—as your friend, mind.

You said awhile ago that we were both in the the same boat—in each other's power, and so far equal. That is only partially true. We are not equal. Your stake is greater than mine. If you turn on me, you cannot reduce me to a much worse state than I was in when I first met you. No one would know anything of me; my fall would affect myself alone, and make no noise. But if I should turn on you—ye gods! what a sensation 'twould cause.

‘Stand on the steps of your hall door, and look around you. Far as the eye can reach on every side the broad fat acres are yours. You are a man of title; you will go into Parliament at the next election. When O'Neill dies, I don't see why you should not be Lord-Lieutenant of the county. And if your cousin dies before you, you may go to the House of Lords. Now, I will even help you to marry this heiress—but on my own terms. The risk is great, but the advantages are greater, and you will not refuse to pay my price. You are well received by your neigh-

bours—a few idle rumours are heard about you, but nothing more; your criminal history under a feigned name is unknown; all the scheming mammas in Ireland, and in England for the matter of that, have their eyes on you; their daughters are setting their caps at you; they don't know that the estate is dipped. You are young, good-looking—I might call you handsome, only I don't want to flatter you. Your secrets are known only to one man, and it's his interest to keep them; but, remember that this whole fabric of prosperity—hall, estates, title, wife, name, everything, falls with a crash to the ground if one finger touches it, and that finger is mine. Do not forget that you hold all by my permission, that a word of mine could send you from Hare Court to the hulks. Beware, therefore, how you provoke me.'

Sir Bernard listened patiently to this long lecture. He made no attempt to interrupt the speaker. He did not even look at him, but sat with his legs stretched out, looking intently into the fire, biting his moustache, and stroking his

beard. It was true, he felt, every word of it. Flood had only stated the naked facts, but he had never put them so strongly and connectedly before. In the elation of his prosperity he had almost forgotten them: did not like to think that he was at this man's mercy, and that there was no escape, but one, from his clutches. But now he was unmistakably reminded of his position, and the iron entered his soul.

If Captain Flood had known the deadly purpose that Carew was revolving in his mind, and the passions that were raging in his heart; if he could have seen the furtive look of fear and hatred which the baronet cast on him as he left the room, he would not have laid down his head that night so contentedly on his pillow.

CHAPTER II.

A LOVE DISAPPOINTMENT.

THE clock of Trinity College, Dublin, had just struck midnight, as Tom Butler closed a volume of Greek plays which he had been carefully studying all the evening, rose wearily from the table, and put aside the huge Lexicon and other works of reference he had been consulting, looked thoughtfully over four or five pages of closely-written manuscript, held them for a moment or two in his hand, as if uncertain what to do with them, then deliberately tore them up into small fragments and tossed them on the fire, exclaiming, as they curled in the blaze, ‘What folly this ambition of mine is! If I cannot find something original to say, I shall not write at all. And what can I say on the subject that has not been said ten thousand times before? Like one of these Greek trage-

dies, 'tis the old story of sin and suffering, in which the Fates and Furies guide the threads of life, and wretched mortals strive in vain against relentless destiny.'

The speaker was about the middle height, though slightly, yet strongly built; his age was about three-and-twenty, but he looked much older. His features were large and strongly marked. Luxuriant masses of soft dark hair fell over his square broad forehead, and from beneath the prominent eyebrows there gleamed a pair of large, dark grey eyes, of unusual brilliancy and fire. Either anxiety or some great sorrow had left deep lines of care upon his face; or was it a presentiment of the sad tragedy in store for him, that on this occasion gave such an air of gloom and suffering to his countenance?

The room which he occupied was plainly, but comfortably furnished, and, unlike College chambers in general, everything was scrupulously clean. The blinds were down, and the curtains drawn. A moderate lamp, covered

with a green shade, was burning on the table; and a bright fire in the grate gave the room a cheerful, cosy appearance. The only indication of luxury which it contained, was a large book-case, with glass doors, filled with volumes in gorgeous bindings, which evidently had not been bought, but were obtained by the owner as College prizes at various examinations.

With hands clasped behind his back, he paced up and down the room for nearly an hour, lost in thought; occasionally his brows contracted, a dark frown settled on his face, and he ground his teeth, as if some painful memory had stung him. Once he started, as a superstitious feeling came over him, which brought the perspiration to his forehead, and he turned round quickly, as if expecting to find some one in the room with him. He gave a sigh of relief on finding that he was alone. Then he suddenly stopped, turned down the lamp, drew aside the curtains, threw up the window, and looked out upon the frosty February night.

Everything was still, not a sound broke the silence, not a solitary foot-fall was heard in the College courts. Even the distant hum usually heard from Nassau Street had ceased. No lights glimmered in any of the College windows. The library opposite to him was sunk in deepest shade, while over head the cloudless sky was blazing with countless stars, the constellation of the Great Bear hung over the chapel, and the glittering, quivering myriads of orbs made the whole dome of heaven seem living. He gazed up awe-struck at the splendid spectacle, and exclaimed mournfully, 'How well they have kept their secret! Interrogated as to their meaning by thousands of troubled souls, the stars are dumb. To all inquiries they give no answer. I feel with Pascal, that "The eternal silence of those infinite spaces affrights me."'

He was startled from his reverie by a loud knocking at his door, and on opening it, there entered about as fine a specimen of manly beauty as the eye need look upon. The new comer was over six feet two, with a perfect

Grecian face; his wavy auborn hair parted in the centre, and brushed behind his small pink ears, gave him an appearance which would have been feminine in its delicacy, if it had not been redeemed by the incipient whiskers and moustaches of the same colour.

‘Why, O’Neill, what brings you here at this time of night? Where in the world have you been?’

‘Oh, I have been at Gleeson’s: I saw the light in your room as I was passing, and I thought I would look in. I don’t want to go to bed.’

‘You have been drinking, as usual,’ Butler remarked.

‘Drinking! I should think I had, rather, a few.’

‘And you are blind drunk at this present moment, I have no doubt.’

‘No, I am not drunk. I wish I was. Other fellows *can* get drunk, I can’t: that’s the “allegory” of it. Which things are lines. If I could get a good typhus or delirium tremens, I

might do some good. I want to get thoroughly shattered.'

'Whether you get typhus or not, one thing is quite certain, you are going to the devil head-long,' Butler said indignantly

'Yes! No mistake about that. He will have me before long, and I wish him joy of his bargain.'

'I was under the impression you were going to reform. A few months ago you were sober occasionally; but now I see you are quite hopeless, and therefore I'll have nothing more to do with you.'

'Yes, there is no hope for me. I am going, as you say, head-long to perdition. And yet I don't want to go. But I do.'

'That is because you are so miserably weak that you have no power to resist the slightest temptation. These fellows do as they like with you. You have been at Gleeson's, you say?'

'Yes! We have been there since Friday night, card playing and drinking the whole

time. What day is this?' he added, shutting one eye, and looking up with the other inquiringly at the ceiling. 'Let us consult.'

'Monday night, or rather Tuesday morning.'

'No, never; it can't be. By Jove! then, we have been three days and nights at it.'

'I thought I saw you going to chapel yesterday morning?'

'So we did, eight of us. Six of them divinity students.'

'All of them drunk, I suppose?' said Butler.

'Every man. We had been up the whole of the night before. I won a lot of money for the first time, and Gleeson insisted on his revenge. So we had to stay.'

'Very nice! Highly proper indeed, upon my word,' rejoined Butler, ironically, his lip curling up with scorn. 'You'll be worthy ornaments of the Church. I have no doubt sentimental young ladies will fall prone before you one day, and worship you as saints. "These be thy gods, O Israel!"'

O'Neill had drawn a chair to the table and sat down. He looked kindly at his rigid censor. His whole face beamed with benignity and humour. To Butler's astonishment he pulled a number of peas from his pocket, which he carefully counted on the table. Not satisfied with his first scrutiny, he counted them the second time, with the same result. Still incredulous he was about making a third trial, when Butler asked :

‘What are you counting those peas for?’

O'Neill made no reply until he had counted the peas one by one, and found they numbered seventeen.

‘There must be some mistake,’ he cried. ‘Surely I have not had seventeen grogs;’ and then added by way of explanation, ‘I keep a most accurate account of all I drink. I always take a lot of peas in my pocket, and for every beer or grog I change a pea from one pocket to the other, and I find I have had seventeen grogs to-night.’

‘Do you mean to say,’ said Butler, ‘that

you drank seventeen glasses of whisky in one evening?’

‘Yes, I thought I had had only fifteen, but there are the peas: they don’t err.’

‘Merciful Heavens! cried Butler, ‘I wonder you are not dead. Do you always drink like that?’

‘Well! fourteen is my general allowance. Sometimes I go up to sixteen, and even eighteen. I have done as many as twenty, but it was for a wager, and then I left all the other fellows, as I did to-night, senseless under the table.’

‘Twenty g’asses of whisky! The thing seems incredible. How in the name of wonder do you manage it?’

‘You must make your head while you are young. I commenced when I was only seven.’

‘Make your head! What does that mean?’

‘Begin early in life, and go on by slow degrees. It is a science in itself. Eating is the foundation. You must go regularly to work. If you want to prepare for a night’s drinking, you must dine properly. Touch not a drop of soup; eschew fish; take no gravy:

no liquids of any kind. Keep to the solid lean beef and mutton, potatoes and bread: avoid pastry as you would avoid death. Don't even look at desert. You may then pile in the wine or whisky till you're full to the throat—till it actually comes out through your eyebrows.'

'Oh, that's it, is it? I see you make a perfect science of your vice.'

'Yes! I am like a sow wallowing in the mire—only you must never mix your drinks. That is most essential; as you begin, you must go on. If you commence with beer, keep to it. If with whisky, stick to whisky. If with wine, go on with wine. But never mix your drinks. I've known many a man knocked up by that before the evening was half over.'

In spite of his anger, Butler laughed, there was something so comical in O'Neill's earnestness; he dilated with such gusto on the importance of a non-mixture of drinks, that Butler's gravity, in spite of himself, was completely upset.

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‘O’Neill,’ he cried, ‘I am angry and disgusted with you, and although I laugh, I am vexed with myself for doing so. Do you know what a miserable exhibition you are making of yourself? Are you not ashamed?’

‘Ashamed!’ answered O’Neill, ‘I should think I was. But what’s the use? I go on at it all the same.’

‘If,’ added Butler, ‘you were one of the ordinary men around me, I should not mind. I should feel no interest in you, and would not care. But when I see a man of your abilities making a beast of himself, it enrages me.’

‘Don’t spare me,’ cried O’Neill; ‘I am a beast. Lord! how I do despise myself.’

‘Ay,’ scoffed Butler, ‘I have heard you use these phrases of compunction before, but you soon forgot them. You will go on making a regular whisky barrel of yourself.’

‘Yes,’ replied O’Neill, rising from the table, and walking over to the mantel-piece and looking at himself in the glass, while he pushed the hair with both hands off his temples.

‘I am actually grey from drink.’

‘You look upon it as a joke,’ said Butler, ‘that’s the worst of it.’

‘I am regularly saturated with whisky,’ O’Neill continued, still looking at himself in the glass. ‘It exudes from every pore; shouldn’t wonder if I were to go off in a fit of spontaneous combustion some morning, and find nothing left but my bones. My breath feels like fire.’

‘You may joke, but you’ll find it no joke one of these days. You’ll die a drunkard’s death. Then think of the future.’

‘It’s lines. I often do think of it, and wonder what I was ever born for; I did not want to come into the world, and yet I came. I did not ask to be born, and yet I was; it’s a dispensation.’

‘That’s an old trick of yours, to lay the blame of your own folly on Providence.’

‘Yes, but you say I am going to perdition, and I know I am. I shall be fizzing on a grid-iron soon, a huge black devil, with a tongs, will be turning me, and what I want to know is,

what good will it do him ? and what good will it do me ? ’

‘ A drunken man is not fit to discuss these questions,’ Butler remarked.

‘ But,’ persisted O’Neill, ‘ why should there be a hell ? What necessity is there for flames and brimstone and gridirons ? In my opinion the most terrible hell is the presence of perpetual shame. I am in hell now. You think that I don’t brood over these things, but at times I suffer the tortures of the damned.’

‘ That makes your present conduct all the more inexcusable.’

‘ Why then did that girl throw me overboard ? She has driven me to it. Now I don’t care what becomes of me.’

‘ Oh ! there is a girl in the case, is there ? I did not know that before.’

‘ No ; I didn’t like to tell you, but she has driven me to desperation.’

‘ Sit down,’ said Butler, ‘ and tell me all about it. Who, and what was she ? You told me nothing of this before.’

‘An English girl, a friend of my cousin Helen’s. She was on a visit at Ballyluce when I was at home last vacation. We fell desperately in love with each other. When she was leaving for home, I saw her off by the steamer. We went down into the ladies’ cabin and exchanged vows of eternal constancy, she promised she would never love another, gave me her miniature and a lock of her hair,—here it is—and I gave her a lock of mine.’

‘What style was she?’ inquired Butler.

‘Fair, almost a blonde, with light blue eyes and golden hair, tall and graceful: a regular potentate. Last week she writes me a heartless letter, saying that her father won’t hear of our engagement, and that I am to send back her letters and miniature, and that she is very sorry, and will always think of me as a friend, and, by George! she is to be married this day three months to a rich London banker.

“Inconstancy thy name is woman.”’

‘Well,’ said Butler, ‘what was your reply?’

‘I wrote her a long letter, reproaching

her with her faithlessness. I recalled to her memory all the tender scenes that had taken place between us. I conjured her not to break her sacred vows. I told her the agony that the idea of separation from her gave me, and that I should never be happy again. I proposed to her to escape from parental tyranny, to fly with me, and be happy, but she wouldn't.'

'More fool you,' said Butler. 'If a girl jilted me in that way, I would not bestow a thought upon her. I'd treat her with contempt. I've no doubt, by this time, she has shown your letter to all the girls of her acquaintance, and some of them have laughed and giggled over it. That letter is a triumph to her.'

'Yes, but I was half mad when I wrote it; I thought she might relent. When she was parting from me she made such promises, hung around my neck, kissed the face off me, and almost cried her eyes out.'

'And you have not sent her back her portrait and the golden ringlet?'

'No, I could not bear to part with them.'

‘Send them back to her at once, with a cool, indifferent letter, saying that you quite agree with her, that you found you had made a mistake, and that it is best it should be broken off between you. If anything can bring her to her senses that will.’

‘Well, will you write a copy of the letter for me? If I write, I shall be sure to make a fool of myself again.’

‘Oh! I’ll write with pleasure, and give you a letter that will do her good. I’ll give her something she won’t forget in a hurry.’

‘Here,’ said O’Neill, pulling some papers out of his pocket, ‘is a poem I wrote upon her yesterday;’ and he selected one from amongst the number, and handed it to Butler. ‘I had some stunning poetry about her in my head in chapel on Sunday, but I forgot to write it down, and now I can’t remember it,’ he added.

Butler took the manuscript, looked carelessly over it, and then read aloud:

‘I loved another,—she was fair
As an angel from the skies.
My heart was in her golden hair,
And in her bright blue eyes.

‘Because if she did she was quite right to throw you over; perhaps she heard of it.’

‘No, that was scarcely possible, and she never saw me drink. I took nothing in her presence but wine.’

‘And to look at you, no one would think you drank.’

‘No; that’s the mystery of it. I wonder why the deuce I’ve such a face.’

‘If you ever do get a wife, it will be a revelation to her.’

‘Won’t it be a sell? She will never think I drink. I look so meek, she will be writing home to her mother that she is so happy, but great will be her surprise when she finds me lurking off to the nearest tap. She will have to take active measures.—I say, Butler, have you any drink? I am as thirsty as ten thousand fishes?’

‘Yes,’ said Butler, ‘there’s some of your friend Bass. Why don’t you fall in love with this beautiful cousin of yours of whom you have told me so much, and marry her?’

‘With Helen! I’d as soon think of falling in love with a sister if I had one.’

‘If she is so good and so beautiful, why not?’

‘That is the very reason. There is not such a girl in the three kingdoms, as Helen. She is a beauty if you like. We are about the same age, but she is ten years older in point of sense and tact, and has always treated me as a child. In love with Helen indeed! There is not a man in Europe worthy of her, except yourself, and so I wrote to her the other day——’

‘Nonsense! You did nothing of the kind.’

‘I did though. She is all anxiety to see you. She has refused fifty offers already. The idea of me making love to Helen! I’d as soon think of making love to the moon, and now it’s getting late, *vale!* old fellow, I’ll go to bed.’

CHAPTER III.

THE COLLEGE CHUMS.

ON a fine October morning, about three years before the events recorded in the last chapter, Butler and O'Neill, up to that time strangers to each other, found themselves side by side in the theatre of Trinity College, Dublin. About twenty other students were seated at the low oaken tables; some engaged in *vivâ voce* examination by the fellows, while others were busy translating and writing answers to the questions on the printed papers.

Those present had, on the previous day matriculated with a crowd of others, and for their superior attainments had been selected for a second examination, in order to be placed according to their respective merits.

First place at entrance is always an object of ambition, both to students and head masters of

classical schools ; to the first, on account of the honour it confers ; to the latter, on account of the *éclat* and consequent profit it brings to their institutions.

The next day an eager crowd of students, grinders, and schoolmasters surrounded the door of the hall, when the lists were posted up. To the surprise and vexation of the latter none of their pupils had achieved the coveted distinction.

The first name on the list was that of Thomas Stead Butler. The favourites had been all distanced. An outsider had won the race. The second name on the list was that of Robert Augustus O'Neill, Soc. com.

O'Neill was a younger son of Sir Arthur O'Neill Bart., of Ballyluce Castle, County Limerick.

He had received his first education at a college in Bath. From thence he had been transferred to the High School in Edinburgh ; but for the last two years and a half he had been a boarder at the Royal School of Dungannon. The head master of that establish-

ment, himself a famous classical scholar and successful teacher, had conceived a high opinion of O'Neill's abilities, and had taken unusual pains with him. More than six months previous to the examination he had read all the books of the entrance course with his favourite pupil, and had carefully made him up in all the points, or, as it is sometimes profanely called, *cram*, which tells so powerfully with College examiners. Dr. Ringold had boasted of O'Neill's proficiency, and had confidently predicted his success. Great, therefore, was his disappointment, when he heard the name of Butler read first, and that O'Neill was only second on the list.

A murmur of surprise ran through the crowd, and each man asked his neighbour, 'Butler? Butler? Who is he? Where is he from?' No one could give any information about him. Even his tutor, Dr. Kells, could only say that Butler had not been to any public school, but had been educated entirely by an old Dissenting minister, in one of the midland counties.

Instead of feeling envious or jealous of his rival's triumph, O'Neill was one of the first most warmly to congratulate Butler on his success. He had seen enough, and heard enough, of him during the two days' previous examination to be convinced, not only of Butler's superiority in scholarship, but of his still greater superiority in powers of expression and original thought. He, therefore, abandoned all hope of rivalry with his victor, and conceived for him a warm and disinterested friendship. No greater contrast could be found than existed between the two friends. In habit, taste, temperament, and disposition they were the very reverse of each other. If Sallust be right, that to like and dislike the same things, is the firmest bond of friendship; may it not also be true that a total dissimilarity of tastes may form a still stronger attraction?

O'Neill had been entered on the College books as a fellow-commoner, a privilege which entitled him to pay a double price for his tuition, rooms, and dinner, to sit at the fellows'

table and to wear a silk gown. He at once obtained chambers and commenced residence.

Butler was only a pensioner. He resided principally in the country, and only came up to College three times a year to pass his term examinations. In these he had been signally successful, and had carried off all the chief honours of his junior and senior freshman years. Within the last ten months he had come to reside in the house, and had been fortunate enough to obtain rooms next to his friend O'Neill.

Here Butler lived a retired and almost solitary life. His days and nights were spent in profound study. He avoided society: he sought no friendships, and made no acquaintances. He was only on the most distant speaking terms even with the men whom he met daily at the commons table, and at the time our tale opens, with the exception of his tutor, O'Neill was almost his only acquaintance, and certainly his only friend.

He was never found at any of the College



parties, and took no part in the College sports. Even when practicable, he took his name off the buttery books, preferring to dine at a restaurant in the city. Occasionally he was seen in the College chapel, and then with an expression of countenance that spoke anything but respect for either the preacher or his hearers. He steadily resisted all O'Neill's attempts to make him join his set, and for all the practical jokes of the students, such as blowing doors open with gunpowder, wrenching off city knockers, and drawing caricatures of obnoxious individuals on the walls or doors of their chambers, he manifested the utmost scorn and contempt.

From all of this it may be easily imagined that he was not a popular man in the University. He was amongst them, but not of them. Like all men who pursue an unusual course, and refuse to comply with the habits and customs of the time and place, he was liable to be misrepresented and misunderstood. Whether he was rich or poor no one knew. From the

style and appearance he kept up, it was evident he was not straitened in his pecuniary means, while his careful economy and non-indulgence in extravagant habits was an indication that he had no money to spare.

He knew himself that he was the subject of unfavourable remarks amongst many of the College cliques and coteries; but that gave him little concern, as it was the price which individuality always has to pay, and from which if he had belonged to the crowd he would have been exempt.

It was O'Neill's pleasant task on more than one of these occasions to defend his absent friend, declaring, in his own absolute, superlative way, that Butler was worth all the other members of the University put together, himself included.

The morning after the conversation recorded in the preceding chapter, Butler entered O'Neill's room, and found him seated gloomily by the fire. The excitement of the previous day's drinking had passed away, and he was

now suffering from the inevitable réaction, with its attendant horrors and remorse.

‘Well,’ said Butler, looking around him, ‘I see you are in the blues. You are now paying the penalty of your indiscretion ;’ and he drew a chair over to the fire and sat down.

‘I say, O’Neill, what a dirty dog your servant must be. He has not dusted these chairs for a month of Sundays,’ and he drew out a pocket handkerchief and performed the operation himself. As he did so he could not help comparing the state of O’Neill’s rooms with his own.

The fender, hearth, and stove were covered with ashes and cinders, the fire-irons were rusty. An iron kettle, the lid, sides, and handle of which were incrustated thickly with soot, was boiling on the fire. There was a general effect of dust and ashes everywhere. The mantel-piece was littered with pipes, meerschaum bowls, amber mouth-pieces, matches, cigar boxes, and ends of cigars. A long Chinese opium pipe was suspended over the chimney-piece, the table was covered with crumbs of

bread, a box of steel pens, seals, cork-screws, ink bottles, bad pence, and a japanned tea-caddy.

The patterns of the costly carpet and hearth-rug were rendered almost indistinguishable by having trampled into them a general mixture of dust, crumbs, tobacco ashes, splashes of soda water, the froth of bitter beer, and the cream of Guinness's stout. Cobwebs were in the corners of the room, and on the ceiling; and the windows were opaque with dirt.

O'Neill was attired in an Indian dressing gown lined with crimson silk, he had on a blue smoking cap, and in his hand a pipe at which he gazed admiringly. 'Look at that pipe,' he cried, 'is it not splendidly coloured?'

'You know I don't smoke,' Butler replied.

'I forgot that; that pipe only cost twopence, and it is worth a pound. Little Barnett would give anything for it, and badly as I want "coriander seed"—this was O'Neill's name for money—I don't think I would sell it for thirty shillings this moment.'

'Have you no money?' Butler inquired.

'Not a farthing, I lost every shilling at

Gleeson's, and now I have not the price of a breakfast.'

'I can let you have some,' said Butler, handing him a five-pound note.

'You're a brick, by Jove! That's a haul. Now I'll have some beer.'

'Why don't you write to your father for some money?' inquired Butler.

'So I have, but he wouldn't stand. Last week I wrote him a heart-rending appeal,' and opening his writing-desk, he drew out a copy of the letter which ran as follows:—

"30, Trinity College, Dublin, Feb. 3.

"Implacable and Iron Hearted Sire,

"I am destitute. Send me twenty pounds by return of post, or, if not, come up on Friday morning and you will find me in Kilmainham jail, on the treadmill grinding corn for the prisoners, on the side next the wall, as it is the easiest.

"Yours in despair, ever,

"R. A. O'NEILL.

"Sir A. O'NEILL, Bart., Ballyluce Castle."

‘Did you actually send that letter to your father, O’Neill?’ asked Butler, laughingly.

‘I did, and here’s his answer:’—

“Ballyluce Castle, February 4.

“DEAR BOB,

“If I thought I would find you on the treadmill I would go up to Dublin next Friday morning with great pleasure. I am sure you deserve it.

“Yours ever, in haste,

“A. O’NEILL.

“R. A. O’NEILL, Esq., 30, Trinity College, Dublin.

“P.S.—I will gladly pay anyone twenty pounds, who will inform me that you are positively in Kilmainham jail.”’

‘And he sent you no money,’ said Butler, laughing at the laconic reply.

‘No, not a solitary ghost.’

‘He leaves you short, then, I imagine?’ replied Butler. ‘How do you manage?’

‘I buy books at the bookseller’s, and sell them at the second-hand shops; the Iron

Hearted has to pay for them. I got eighteen shillings for Liddell and Scott on Thursday.'

'But the price of the book is two pounds four,' rejoined Butler.

'Yes, I know that, but I get the eighteen shillings now, and he won't have to pay the two pounds four until next November. I think I have had six copies of Liddell and Scott within the last six months. I don't know what the shopman thinks of me. The last time I went in for one, he said, "Dear me, sir, you wear out your lexicons very fast, you must read very hard;" I said I did. You should have seen the fellow smile as I left the shop. He knows right well what I do with them.'

'Does your father never look over your bookseller's bills?' asked Butler, half amused, and yet half angry at the other's recklessness.

'No, never, he just orders a cheque to be sent for the amount and swears most awfully. "Grote's History of Greece" is a wonderful book. Published in twelve volumes, at eight pounds odd, he brings three pounds ten. I

have had several copies of Grote since Christmas; I ordered another copy last week. Alford's "Greek Testament" is a most learned and valuable work, he brings thirty-five shillings. My devotion to the study of Biblical Greek is something extraordinary. I get a copy of every new edition of Alford as fast as it comes out. Latham on the "English Language," too, is not to be sneezed at. I flooded the market with him; the last copy I sold, I got but ten shillings for it, formerly they gave me twelve. It stopped a gap.'

'You are a nice youth,' said Butler. 'You make your father pay about three hundred per cent. for every pound you raise in that way.'

'Why then does he treat me so stingily?'

'Well how much does he allow you?' Butler asked.

'Only ten pounds a month.'

'Have you to pay for your commons out of it?'

'Lord, no! he pays that besides.'

'Does he pay your tuition fees also?'

'Tuition fees! yes, of course he does.'

‘And the rent of these chambers?’

‘I should think so, indeed!’

‘Then you go home every vacation, do you not?’

‘Yes; he sends me ten pounds to pay my fare home, and gives me the same amount when I am coming back, besides an odd ten pounds during the vacation.’

‘Then he pays your tailor’s bills, I presume?’

‘Certainly, I may have as many suits of clothes as I like. There is no limitation.’

‘I wonder you do not take to selling or pawning them,’ Butler said.

‘So I did, but the swell at the three balls glared at me over his gold spectacles, so suspiciously, I thought he was going to send for a policeman, and even then he only gave me fifteen shillings on a coat that cost me five pounds, so I thought I’d fall back on Latham, the Greek Testament, and Grote.’

‘And then, of course, he pays the bookseller’s bills?’

‘Yes, he can’t help himself, or else he wouldn’t: catch him at it.’

‘Wait a moment, and, as you say, “let us consult,” and see what it all comes to in the year,’ and Butler took up a pen to write down the separate items.

‘No,’ said O’Neill, deprecatingly, ‘don’t do that, that’s what the Iron Hearted does every Christmas; he calls me into his sanctum, and gives me such a lecture, and writes it all down in his tablets, and says, “Look you here, sir! see what you have cost me this year!” and vows he’ll put a stop to it, and makes it out such a fearful sum—hundreds actually!’

‘Be quiet a moment,’ said Butler, as he wrote down the separate items.

‘Rent of chambers, twenty pounds. Monthly allowance, one hundred and twenty pounds. Commons, thirty-six pounds. Tuition fees, thirty pounds. Travelling charges, sixty pounds. Tailor’s bills, fifty pounds. Book-seller’s bill, how much? A hundred a-year?’

‘No, not so much as that, about eighty, or perhaps ninety.’

‘Very well! We’ll take the lowest amount, say Bookseller’s, eighty pounds—then Sundries, forty pounds. Why, do you know, my fine fellow, tyrannized over by your cruel parent—you cost your Iron Hearted sire something to the tune of four hundred and fifty or five hundred pounds a-year?’

‘No, never, that’s impossible.’

‘Yes, but you do though, there are the figures, alter them if you can. There is many a man in this city maintaining a wife and family, keeping up a respectable appearance, and obliged to dress as a gentleman on one half the sum.’ O’Neill replied only with a stare of amazement and incredulity.

‘Fact, I tell you,’ repeated Butler, with emphasis.

‘You muddle away the money and get nothing for it. I dress as well as you do, my rooms are cleaner than yours, I don’t buy new books and sell them at a third their cost, and

yet my whole expenses last year were only a hundred pounds or about a fifth of what you cost your father. Now what have you to say ?

‘Say ? I am dumb, I am like a sheep that openeth not his mouth.’

‘I am just thinking, O’Neill, that you are not worthy of one half the advantages you possess. You have friends ; social position and means ; no care ; no anxiety on your mind ; nothing to do but to attend to your studies ; nothing to prevent you from making a position and a name. Compare your circumstances, with those of some of the men around you and see how much they have to envy in your lot.’

‘I am not so sure all these things are advantages. I often think I should be better off if I were thrown on a desolate island, and compelled, to shift for myself,’ O’Neill replied.

‘If you were, it would soon cure you of these independent fancies. If you were left to your own resources, I should like to know what you could do ? Enlist, I suppose ?’

‘I think I could write poems for Moses & Co.



I hear they keep a poet, or I might celebrate the praises of our family mixture at two-and-eight. Or here,' he said, taking up "Saunders' News Letter" of that morning—'Here's an opening for me: "Wanted, a smart, active young man, to clean bottles; salary sixteen shillings a-week. Must be well recommended." Sixteen shillings a week is a haul. I'm a smart, active young man, and I can get any amount of recommendation.'

'You have an unhappy genius for giving a comic aspect to every subject, no matter how serious. You make a joke of everything.'

'Well then,' cried O'Neill, 'I'll tell you what we will do. We will invent a new elixir, or patent cure for corns, or the "Anti-Flea and Bug Mixture, warranted." I vote for the elixir.'

Butler could not help laughing at the solemn gravity of tone and manner with which these various plans were propounded.

'The "Elixir of Life" is the idea,' continued O'Neill, as he rapidly proceeded to

extemporize an advertisement in these terms :—
‘Tremendous discovery!!! Death blow to humbug, quackery, and imposture! Great triumph of modern science. The Elixir of Life, discovered and patented by Professors Butler and O’Neill.’

‘No, thank you; no thank you;’ interrupted Butler. ‘Don’t mix me up in it, if you please. You may keep all the glory of the discovery to yourself, and all the profit too, if you can make any.’

‘The benefactors of the human race,’ O’Neill went on, ‘who have discovered the science of sciences, are determined to destroy all the evils which afflict mankind. They have the pleasure to announce, that by this extraordinary discovery—the Elixir of Life—humanity is rescued from its fallen condition and restored to more than its pristine glory. By its magic influence, age flings off its decrepitude and bursts into the vigour of renewed youth. The soft bloom of beauty and the vigour of manhood, by its mysterious, but infallible power,

are preserved from the attacks of time and the inroads of decay. Before its healing qualities, sickness vanishes, disease flies, and pain disappears. No case—no matter how hopeless—is too desperate for its healing power. A cure in every instance guaranteed. To be had of the inventors, Professors Butler and O'Neill, in bottles at five shillings, ten shillings, fifteen shillings, and thirty shillings each. One large bottle contains as much as ten small ones.

‘It is needless to observe that these prices are merely nominal, in order to defray the expense of the production, which, on account of the valuable materials employed, comes heavy. The Legislature will, no doubt, provide these materials by-and-by, at the public expense, for the common good. Professors Butler and O'Neill derive no benefit whatever from their grand discovery; they are rather losers by it. The hope of serving their fellow-creatures is their sufficient reward.

‘Beware of spurious imitations. Every bottle will have on the label the signature of Butler

and O'Neill. Apply at once to No. 30, Trinity College, Dublin. There,' he cried with an air of triumph, 'there's a fortune in that. We might add,—“The Professors may be consulted from ten to two o'clock, and from four to eight, P.M.” We shall have crowds coming for the elixir. You can do all the talking to the patients, and I'll remain inside, brooding over the elixir, and drinking Bass all day long.'

'What nonsense you do talk,' said Butler, amused at the same time at the elation O'Neill displayed over his discovery.

'My patience,' continued O'Neill, 'wouldn't my father be astonished coming in for a bottle of elixir, to find me here; but I'll be merciful upon him. I'd give him a thirty-shilling bottle gratis in token of my oblivion of all the times he had turned a deaf ear to my most urgent solicitations for tin. I'd show him that I bore him no malice, but freely forgave him all. Another might remember his treatment, but I wouldn't. I'd heap coals of fire upon his implacable head.'

‘If you had only ordinary prudence,’ said Butler, ‘you need not resort to any such schemes; it seems to me that when you do get money you are never easy until you have spent it.’

‘What’s the use of keeping it?’ replied the other. ‘It has to go; it may as well go at first as at last. It makes to itself wings and flies away. To have money is a positive burden upon my mind; it oppresses me. When it’s gone my mind is easy, and the best of it is I don’t know where the deuce it goes to. But it does go.’

‘No wonder it goes. You are always drinking. Why do you spend so much of it upon grog?’

‘I may as well spend it on grog; if I didn’t it would soon go upon something else, and I may as well secure the grog while I have it.’

‘Your monthly allowance lasts you, I suppose, only a few days,’ said Butler.

‘Never more than two. The third day I am without a solitary shilling.’

‘What on earth do you do with it?’

‘Why, there’s Wicks. Six shillings a-week for him; that makes a haul. Then there’s the little account from the grocer, and the bread-man; then, you know, there’s coals. Oh, I forgot the laundry woman; she piles it on most awfully. She makes out such fearful bills against me, charging about twice as much as she ought to, and steals my shirts into the bargain.’

‘Why don’t you count them, then?’ said Butler.

‘Count them! Bless your soul! it is no use. Even if I did, they would make out some excuse or other. I never tried anything of that kind, that I did not get the worst of it. I am the common prey of these people, and they know it. They were sent into the world for the purpose of preying on fellows like me. So you see resistance is no good. I submit quietly to my fate. I bear it all submissively.’

‘Serve you quite right, if you are such a fool,’ said Butler.

‘Yes, when I have paid everything, I generally find that the harpies have left me with about thirty shillings, which I hasten to spend in grog. I go from tap to tap till it’s gone; then there’s the bath at the Northumberland, that costs two-and-sixpence; and after prowling about all day, I lurk in at night with tenpence in coppers, which just gets two bottles of beer for the next morning. I always reserve that much, then it’s all gone, and I am free for another month.’

‘And yet with it all you can’t afford to have your rooms cleaned. Look at the state of them. They are not fit for a pig to live in.’

‘That is all Wicks’ fault; it is against his principles to clean anything.’

‘Are they never swept at all?’ asked Butler.

‘Never, except a little about the fender here. You should have known my former skip; he bought a broom with a handle so long that it couldn’t come into the room. It is lying useless inside there; it cost five bobs, I think. What a lot of grogs you would get for that! I often

think of selling him, but he is too big, I am ashamed to carry him out. He bought that huge bellows too. He snorts like twenty steam engines and kicks up such a dust ! He'll go some day for beer. I wonder what the swell at the "Three Balls" would give for him ?'

Butler roared at the idea of sending an old bellows to a pawn office.

O'Neil continued : 'He was a most fearful fellow for cleaning ; he brushed up that grate and polished that fender fifty times a-day. You heard him whistling like an ostler, and brushing at boots or clothes all day long. You see that kettle there ?'

'Yes, and a very dirty one it is too.'

'Well, he used to have that kettle shining like steel. I think he brightened the bottom of it every day. He made my life perfectly miserable ; he lay in wait for me in that pantry inside, and if I only moved or coughed, he burst out upon me like a clap of thunder, with "Did you want anything, sir ?" I could not stir but what he was out on me. He devoted the

whole of his gigantic energies to myself alone. He had no thought but of me ; if I went out for a moment, when I returned I'd find him on his knees before the fire just giving the stove another rub, until at last I used to be afraid to come in of an evening, knowing what was before me.'

'And you dismissed him, I suppose,' said Butler, 'for being too clean ?'

'No, I dismissed him for being a rogue. I went home at Christmas, and when I came back I found all my books sold, my blankets, sheets, tablecloths, cap and gown, and everything he could lay his hand on, pledged.'

'And the thief had fled, I suppose ?'

'Not a bit of it ; he had everything that was left as usual, and brought me the pawn tickets, weeping. He told me that if I would lend him five pounds to redeem the things, he would work the next six months for nothing.'

'And what did you do ? Gave him the money, of course ?'

‘No. I released the things that were pledged; those that were sold I never got.’

‘Did you prosecute him?’

‘No; he made such vows and promises, and howled to that extent that I pitied him. Afterwards I found out that his whole tribe had been living here while I was away; no doubt holding high revelry on the price of my tablecloths.’

‘But if you did not prosecute him, why did you not dismiss him?’ Butler asked.

‘What could I do? He was always coming to me with the story about his sick child. That child had every imaginable disease; indeed, I think it sometimes had them all together, for in one day he has told me he had measles, quinsy, hooping-cough, colic, scarlatina, and convulsions—rather a sturdy child, wasn’t he? I often wished that child might die, but he would not, though twenty times at the point of death, and given over by the doctor, who said he could not live till morning; that night, at twelve, he surely got a change for the better,

purposely; I think he lived in order to prey on me.'

'I can't understand why you did not send him away,' remarked Butler.

'I tried; I was here for three weeks striving to get rid of him, and forming all kinds of plans to get him out, but couldn't; he wouldn't go. I then resorted to a subtle dodge: I pretended I had lost my key, and got his from him and locked him out, and hoped I had got rid of him. When I came in that night I found him here before me; he had got in through the window. I swore at him, and ordered him to be off, but he went down on his knees, began to cry, looked at me reproachfully, and said he thought we should never part. At last I could stand him no longer; and one night I flung the poker at him, and told him to fly or I'd have his life. I had been drinking all day in order to get up my courage to the sticking point.'

'He must have been rather astonished when you hurled the poker at him.'

'He was; but I did not give him a moment;

my blood was up ; gallons of Bass had made me brave, and, like Jove, I launched the bolt at his head. He ducked, rushed to the door, and fled. I have never seen him since ; but I did not recover the effects of it for a month, the effort knocked me up so.'

'I don't know that you are better off with Wicks, he is just as great a thief ; only he's dirty, and the other was clean ; that's the only difference. I found him stealing my things, but I soon put a stop to it. He cleans my rooms, but not till I make him do it.'

'Thief !' said O'Neill, 'of course he is ; they are all thieves. I think it is his wife, however, for I found sugar and tea vanish, as if the fairies took them. Candles, soap, and butter are eaten — by the mice, of course, — though there are two traps in the room, cunningly baited with cheese, into which the reptiles will not go. He will never clean more than one knife, and that won't cut I have to tear my bread asunder when I have any, although I paid sixpence for a great

yellow rock on which to clean them ; but he won't.'

'All this only proves how miserably weak you are,' said Butler. 'How is it that you have no strength or force of character ? The idea of a man being afraid to dismiss his own servant ! Now I know the secret of all your wretched drinking and dissipation : you have not sufficient firmness to resist the solicitations of your contemptible boon companions. "Unstable as water thou shalt not excel."'

'I am afraid you are right,' said O'Neill. 'I only wish I was like you.'

'The very best thing I can do for you,' said Butler, 'is to take charge of your money when it comes, and dole it out to you as you want it. You will not then be obliged to resort to these discreditable shifts and expedients.'

'Do, do ; it's the very thing,' cried O'Neill, delightedly. 'It will be doing me the greatest possible service.'

And so it was arranged.

CHAPTER IV.

BALLYLUCE CASTLE.

SIR ARTHUR and Lady O'Neill, their niece Helen, and her governess Miss Dillon, were assembled in the large breakfast-room at Ballyluce Castle, when the aged butler entered the room and placed the letter-bag upon the table. The worthy baronet carefully wiped his spectacles before opening and distributing its contents. He flung aside a batch of newspapers, and assorted the letters before he handed them to their owners.

'Two for you, my dear,' he cried, addressing Lady O'Neill. 'That, Miss Dillon, is your property; and here, Nell, if I mistake not, this for you is from your Cousin Bob.'

Then Sir Arthur opened and read his own correspondence. The first was a long letter from his solicitor about some leases on the Abbey

property :—‘That,’ he cried, ‘can wait,’ and he put it aside. An official communication from the High Sheriff respecting some county business, carelessly scanned. Two applications for farms, and a begging letter on behalf of an orphan asylum. There was one letter, however, sealed with the Carew Arms, at the address of which Sir Arthur looked closely, and then read its contents with considerable surprise.

The letter was from Sir Bernard Carew, Bart., the owner of the largest estate in the county. It was marked “private and confidential,” and was to the effect that the writer desired an interview with Sir Arthur O’Neill at the earliest opportunity upon a matter of the utmost importance. In fact, that he had long felt the highest admiration for Miss O’Neill, and was desirous of her uncle’s permission to make her an offer of his heart and hand. If Sir Arthur could make it perfectly convenient to meet him at the hunt the following day, he would then explain his views at length. If not, he would be most happy

to wait upon him at any time and place he might appoint. Until then he hoped Sir Arthur would be good enough, as a personal favour, to keep the matter to himself.

Sir Arthur carefully read the letter twice over before he took off his spectacles, and looked across the table at his lovely niece, who was deeply absorbed in the perusal of her cousin's letter.

'Hum,' he thought to himself, 'this is something new and unexpected. I see the fellow has more taste than I gave him credit for. Although she is my niece, Helen is a peerless girl; they may well call her the pride of Limerick. In the next ten counties her match could not be found. A king might be proud to call the girl his bride. And so Carew is in the field. 'Tis true he has been a wild dog, got Eugene into many a mess; but he may reform, and he has an unencumbered rent-roll—twenty-three thousand-a year if it's a shilling, and if the present lord should die without family, he is the next heir to the title. Nell's

own property with his would amount to thirty thousand a-year, a very handsome sum indeed.'

While these thoughts were passing through his mind he was gazing at Helen's smiling face. She was evidently amused, for her lips parted, and she burst into a merry laugh.

'What are you laughing at, Nell?' her uncle asked. 'Is the letter from Bob? How is the scamp? Wanting money, as usual?'

'A most delightful letter, uncle, filled with all Robert's quaint, fantastic humour; and, wonderful to say, not a word about money in it.' And she read the letter to its conclusion.

'That is a longer letter than he usually writes,' remarked her Aunt Julia. 'What is it all about?'

'The greater part of it is taken up with a long account of a College friend of his, named Butler, who, from all he says of him, must be an Admirable Crichton. You know how fastidious Robert is, and how difficult it is to please him. I never knew him to praise any one before in this way. This Mr. Butler

seems to have completely bewitched him. I should like to know him. If one half of what Bob says of him be true, he must be a noble character. See how enthusiastically he speaks of him.' And she handed the letter to her aunt.

'Butler! Butler!' said Sir Arthur, 'I suppose he is one of the Kilkenny family?'

'If I don't mistake, my dear,' said Miss Dillon, addressing Helen, 'it was a student named Butler won first place from your cousin at the Entrance Examination.'

'You are quite right, dear, so it was,' answered Helen, 'and very likely it is the same. I wish Bob would bring him down with him. I should like to see this paragon.'

'Write and tell Bob to invite him down when he is coming home,' said Lady O'Neill.

'He has asked him already, aunt, more than once; but he has refused to come,' Helen answered. 'How provoking of him.'

'I don't feel quite the thing to-day,' said Sir Arthur, rising from the table, 'and, as the

weather looks settled, I think I will take Rollo, and have a run with the hounds to-morrow. They meet at the Gap. I suppose you will not come, Helen ?'

'No, thank you, uncle. I shall hunt no more this season,' Helen replied, and Sir Arthur retired to his study, and wrote a short note to Sir Bernard Carew, informing him of his intention.

Ballyluce Castle was situated on the banks of the river Shannon, in the county of Limerick. It was an imposing, substantial residence, built of cut stone, and derived its name from the ruins of an ancient castle close by, which had been one of the strongholds of the O'Brien family. This castle, now covered with ivy, had been the scene of many a fierce and bloody struggle in the troubled times of Elizabeth and the Stuarts. In its palmy days the chimes from the seven churches might be heard from its loftiest tower, and a splendid view of the adjoining country be thence obtained.

The cannon of Cromwell had shattered its

battlements, time had completed the work of ruin, and when, some hundred years ago, the fat alluvial lands surrounding it had passed out of the hands of the O'Briens, and came, by marriage, into the possession of an ancestor of the present owner, the old castle was abandoned as a place of residence, and the present mansion erected, from the windows of which might be seen—

‘The lordly Shannon spreading like a sea.’

Sir Arthur O'Neill was a direct descendant of the celebrated Hugh O'Neill, of the Red Hand, better known to the readers of English history, as the Earl of Tyrone, who successively vanquished in battle, and duped in diplomacy, the unfortunate Essex, and almost destroyed the English power in Ireland.

Sir Arthur's father had been a member of the Irish Parliament from 1782 to 1800. He was a warm friend and devoted follower of Henry Grattan, and gave to the Act of Union a stern, though unavailing, opposition; and when Castlereagh thought to purchase his vote

and influence by the offer of an earldom, he not only rejected the bribe with scorn, but openly threatened he would horsewhip, if he did not shoot, the corrupt minister, and remained to the last one of that small band of patriots "faithful amongst the faithless found."

His political principles descended with the estates to his son, and although professing the Reformed faith, Sir Arthur O'Neill was one of the most popular landlords in the south of Ireland. He had never been an absentee. He had not left the management of his estates to a heartless agent, or scheming attorney. He resided continually on his property. His lands were let on long leases, at fair rents, to a thriving and contented tenantry. Even during the famine years he had received a portion of his rents; and when that terrible visitation had passed, on the Ballyluce estate there was not a vacant farm, or levelled homestead.

Sir Arthur was not only popular amongst the peasantry and the farmers, whom he met at fairs and markets, and with whom he talked

familiarly about corn, green crops, and fat bullocks, but also with his own class: and as a magistrate, or foreman of the Grand Jury, or Lord Lieutenant of the County, he was equally popular with the gentry and the landlords. His name was found at the top of the subscription lists for all charitable and philanthropic objects. He was fond of country sports, and liberally supported the county races, and the regattas on the Shannon.

In early life he had been renowned as a steeplechase rider; and even now he was often found at the hunt, where his broad good-humoured face and jovial laugh were always welcome. He had been a keen sportsman, too, as the snipe, grouse, and partridges had found to their cost; but he had been a *bon vivant* also, at a time when a country gentleman never thought of rising from the table until he had finished his third bottle of full bodied-brandied port. Such indulgences bring their penalties; and they came to Sir Arthur in the shape of a red nose, and fierce attacks of gout,

which at times laid him aside for weeks together.

Sir Arthur was admirably seconded in the management of his tenants and estates by his wife. But while he ruled abroad she ruled at home, and he never thought of braving Lady Julia's temper, or running counter to her imperious will. Of late years her ladyship had become a strict Calvinist, and Sir Arthur lived in constant fear of breaking out into strong language, and those expletives which he formerly indulged in without restraint.

Lady Julia was a proud and haughty dame of the old school. She had been a Fitzgerald, and with all the blood of the Geraldines flowing in her veins, she had more than their pride swelling in her heart. She was proud also of her husband's long line of ancestry; and although he was only a baronet, she consoled herself by the reflection that the O'Neills and the Fitzgeralds were illustrious when the ancestors of one-half the aristocracy and monarchs of Europe were only parvenus. She had only

two sons, the elder of whom, Eugene, was a major in the Royal Artillery; and the reader is already acquainted with the younger, as a divinity student in Trinity College, Dublin.

Helen O'Neill, the heroine of our story, was the only daughter of Sir Arthur's brother. Phelim Hugh O'Neill had gone as a soldier in early life to India: he remained there for a number of years, and rose rapidly in his profession. At the age of forty he met and married an English lady, who died shortly after the birth of her first child.

General O'Neill returned to Ireland with his little daughter, purchased a fine estate a few miles from his brother's at Ballyluce, and then died of a diseased liver and a broken heart. By his will he settled the property on Helen in her own right, her uncle Arthur being appointed her guardian and trustee. By the conditions of the will, she was not to marry before the age of twenty-one, without her uncle's consent. At that age she was to be the absolute mistress of herself and fortune. If she

died without issue, or unmarried, the property was to be divided in equal portions between her cousins Eugene and Robert, their heirs and successors.

As the property had been purchased at a time when lands were greatly depreciated, the investment had proved a valuable one. Under Sir Arthur's judicious and careful management the estate rose rapidly in value, and was now bringing in a clear income of over seven thousand pounds a-year. And in this way Helen O'Neill came to be an heiress.

Helen had been the idol of her father's heart. All the love he had felt for her dead mother now revived with increased power for the child. He petted and spoiled her. All her fancies were indulged: her whim was law. He could not bear to be separated from her even for a day. To think of sending her to school was out of the question. He would not hear of it; and almost quarrelled with his sister-in-law for mentioning the subject. He was fortunate

enough, however, to secure as governess for Helen, a Miss Dillon, who, in former times, had been an intimate friend and schoolfellow of her Aunt Julia's.

Miss Dillon's family, through some misfortune, had been reduced in circumstances, and she was thankful enough to accept the general's liberal offers, and take up her home at the Abbey as the governess of his daughter. Miss Dillon was a woman of great abilities and rare accomplishments. She had received an education exceptional in its excellence. She possessed a thorough knowledge of the modern languages, and a slight acquaintance with the Latin tongue. She was extensively read in history, and well versed in English literature. She sang with exquisite taste, and played and painted with equal skill.

Miss Dillon was possessed of one of those kindly, lovable souls that yearn for some object on which to lavish their affection. Her beautiful, wayward pupil soon wound herself round her heart, and when the general died

she poured out upon the orphan girl all the rich treasure of her love. After that sad event, the Abbey and the grounds immediately belonging to it were let to a good tenant, and at Lady O'Neill's earnest request, her old school-fellow and Helen came to reside with her at Ballyluce.

Properly to train and educate her pupil became the chief aim of Miss Dillon's life. To accomplish that purpose no trouble, no expense, was spared. Her natural intellectual powers were strengthened and developed under Miss Dillon's careful culture. They read and wrote together, and Helen became not only a beautiful, but a witty and accomplished girl. Nothing could differ more from the superficial polish and veneering which girls receive in a modern boarding-school than the sound, thorough education which she received from her faithful governess and friend.

A couple of winters' residence in France and Italy still further improved her mind and enlarged her experience. She learned whatever

was to be gathered from travelling, from the sight of cities, of the sublime aspects of nature, and the great works of art. And yet, she was not perfect. She had a temper of her own. She was subject to occasional outbursts of waywardness and impatience. Sometimes she was lost in fits of reverie and abstraction, and at other times she almost drove Miss Dillon to despair by her imperious will.

Miss Dillon sought to restrain Helen in the too open expression of the scorn she felt for her humdrum neighbours and acquaintances. There was in this fair and haughty creature a singular impatience of control: and she looked on the dulness of prosaic country life as a mettled courser of the sun might look upon a slow cart-horse. The very perfection of her health, her splendid animal spirits, her keen sense of enjoyment, and love of excitement, all combined to make her dissatisfied with routine, and careless of Mrs. Grundy's opinion. But even if she grieved her loving

friend by any exhibition of temper or petulance, her winning ways and affectionate caresses soon made Miss Dillon forgetful of the offence. Even Lady O'Neill's cold and formal nature could not resist the contagious warmth of her niece's heart, and she indulged the spoiled and wilful girl as much, if not more, than if she had been her own child.

Her tastes were extravagant and luxurious. Her tropical nature delighted in the richest perfumes and the most gorgeous colours; in splendour and magnificence of every kind. A child of the sun, she shrank instinctively from cold, squalor, and poverty, and revelled in heat, luxury, and abundance. Her boudoir—furnished with satin hangings, the softest carpets, and low couches and chairs upholstered in the richest silks—was a model of elegance and sensuous comfort, while every object lying around was an indication of the owner's chaste and faultless taste. Her eye loved to dwell upon large beds of flowers, and upon landscapes presenting the richest masses of foliage,

and the most effective contrasts of light and shade.

When presented at Court she had been the sensation of the season. The fame of her beauty spread far and wide, and the fact that she was possessed of a fine estate, and fifty thousand pounds in the funds, did not lessen her attractions in the eyes of her admirers. Of course she had plenty of suitors, titled and untitled, but, strange to say, none of them made any impression on her. Neither her aunt nor uncle made any attempt to influence her judgment, but left her to the exercise of her free unfettered choice. Some of her admirers she treated with scorn, all of them with indifference; and when she had reached the age of twenty, she presented the singular phenomenon of a girl, young, beautiful, wealthy, and accomplished, whose impressionable heart had never felt a pang of love.

The more Sir Arthur O'Neill thought over the letter he had received that morning from Carew, the more pleased he was at the idea of

Helen marrying him. As he took his afternoon ride he weighed deliberately all the *pros* and *cons*.

‘I wonder,’ he muttered to himself, ‘if Carew is to be the happy man? Will she accept him? or begad, rather, will she listen to him at all? It is time she should be married. It will take a very heavy responsibility off my shoulders if I get her well settled, and I will take care of the settlements,’ and he rode on in silence.

‘Yes,’ he went on reverting again to the subject, ‘she ought to be married, or she may make a fool of herself some day. She is just one of those impetuous, unworldly girls who scoff at prudence, and she is as likely as not to throw herself away upon a starving curate, or a penniless ensign. I know she is hard to please. She has refused many an eligible man already, but Sir Bernard is about as good a match as she can expect. He is young, well-looking—a man with a pedigree. And such a man, with over twenty thousand a-year, even

though it be made up of rack rents, is not to be found every day. Any other girl but Helen would snap at him. Carew,' he cried, apostrophizing him, 'you shall have my good wishes and best influence. Go in and win.'

CHAPTER V.

MATRIMONIAL ARRANGEMENTS.

THE morning after his conversation with Captain Flood, Sir Bernard Carew rode forth, splendidly mounted on a black hunter, of great size and strength. He was surrounded by half-a-dozen friends and acquaintances, and followed by a crowd of servants and a pack of yelping beagles. Under the bright sun and with the south wind fanning his cheek, he seemed a different man from what he was the night before—scowling at the fire and listening to the captain's terrible sentences. There was now no trace of anxiety or apprehension in his face; and as he gaily chatted and laughed with those about him, and spoke of the day's coming sport, no one would have imagined that he had a skeleton in his closet. He never seemed in better health and spirits, and was the most

brisk and joyous of the group. From the cordial greetings and salutations he received from the country gentlemen that joined the party along the road, it was evident that he was becoming popular—at least with his own class.

He had not been many years in possession of the estate. His father, the late baronet, died a short time before the commencement of our tale, while Sir Bernard, it was said, was travelling in the East. Disagreements of a serious nature had taken place between father and son. It was rumoured that the latter had led a fast and extravagant life in College, and had left Oxford without taking his degree. His father had paid his gambling debts twice, for an enormous amount, and then, for some cause or other, suddenly refused to have any further communication with him. He sternly forbade him to appear at Hare Court, returned his letters unopened, and paid him an allowance quarterly, through his bankers. The correspondence respecting this latter arrange-

ment was carried on by his solicitor, as Sir Edward would not write himself, and from that time forth would not allow his son's name to be mentioned in his presence. No one could tell what his specific offence had been, as the old man, who had been a widower for many years, preserved silence on the subject. He neglected his young plantations, ceased taking an active part in the management of the property, and shut himself up with his medals, his books, and his pictures. When he found his end approaching, he would not allow his son to be informed of his illness, and died without seeing him; indeed, he had been interred nearly a month before Sir Bernard made his appearance at Hare Court, and, after nine years' absence, took possession of his inheritance.

The young baronet's grief, if not profound, was decent. He lived a quiet, almost secluded life. For more than a year after his father's death he wore the deepest mourning, and erected a handsome marble monument to his memory in the parish church. He retained all the old

servants in the establishment, and added several new ones. Gradually the injurious reports about him became less frequent, and at length died away. 'He was young,' people said, 'and had been wild, to be sure; but young men will be young men, all the world over. It was plain that he was now reformed, and was admirably performing the duties of his station. Besides, everyone knew that Sir Edward, although one of the best landlords and kindest neighbours living, was a most eccentric man, and no great importance could be attributed to his quarrels with his son.'

Latterly, too, Sir Bernard had kept a stud of horses and a pack of hounds. He subscribed largely to all the county charities; patronized flower shows, and fancy bazaars for orphan asylums; had Hare Court re-decorated and re-furnished, and kept open house. The old rooms resounded with laughter, song, and revelry. He imported a French cook from Paris; gave bachelor's dinners, pic-nics, balls, and parties to the county families; and none of

the surrounding gentry could hope to vie with the splendour and magnificence of Sir Bernard's entertainments.

In all these efforts to make himself popular with his neighbours he was greatly aided by the advice, suggestions, and assistance of Captain Flood. The captain made himself generally useful, and looked after the tenants, servants, dogs, and horses. He was certainly zealous in Sir Bernard's service, and shared the odium which over-zeal invariably incurs.

The captain came to Hare Court with his patron and had remained there ever since. No one could divine exactly the relations that subsisted between them. The only thing certain was that he possessed the baronet's confidence, for he did nothing of importance without consulting the captain; and some of the servants were of opinion that their master stood in awe of this ill-favoured man, with his wicked eyes, and red, bloated, pimply face; and who looked to be twice Sir Bernard's age.

The latter, to all inquiries on the subject,

carelessly replied that he had known Flood for some time before he returned to Ireland. He had first met him at Havre, and, finding that he had travelled extensively, engaged him as his companion for a tour in Asia Minor. 'And a capital fellow the captain was,' Sir Bernard added; 'up to the languages, habits, and customs of the natives, and all that kind of thing. Begad! they had no chance of fleecing the captain. He was too wide awake for them. Saved one from all sorts of robbery. The Asiatics all thieves, sir. He has been everywhere; knows everything. He was useful to me abroad, and I find him equally useful at home. He does all the drudgery: gad! I don't know what I should do without him.'

The captain did not mention to what regiment he belonged, or what engagements he had been in: he rather avoided the subject; but if it turned up in conversation, and he was closely pressed with questions as to where he had served, and under whom; he contented himself with saying, that he had been a little

wild as a young man—he was ashamed to confess—and had been obliged to sell out early in his career ; and that any little service his sword had rendered to his country had been in India, or China, or at the Cape, according to the society he was in.

Arrived at the appointed place of meeting, Sir Bernard received fresh congratulations on the condition of his hounds and horses, and from no one present did he get a warmer greeting than from Sir Arthur O'Neill.

‘How do you do, Carew? How do you do?’ said the latter, riding up to Sir Bernard, and shaking hands with him. ‘Splendid day for sport, this.’

‘How are you, Sir Arthur? I am glad to see you here,’ Sir Bernard replied; and the two gentlemen by mutual agreement reined up their horses and allowed the assembled sportsmen to precede them, so that their conversation might not be overheard.

After some preliminary remarks and explanations Sir Arthur said :—

‘For these reasons I have said nothing at home about your letter. It might only put obstacles in your way. Better my niece should think I know nothing of it. You will have some difficulties to encounter, but none so far as I am concerned. And I wish you success.’

‘Thanks, Sir Arthur, a thousand thanks for your good opinion,’ replied Sir Bernard; and he twirled his moustaches complacently, as if he did not anticipate much difficulty on the young lady’s part. ‘You would not advise me then to propose at once to Miss O’Neill, although I have your consent?’

‘No,’ Sir Arthur replied; ‘it would be premature. You must get acquainted with her first. Accustom her to your society. Dine with us to-morrow, or next day. Look in upon us without ceremony. No man should make a girl an offer until he is sure she feels some interest in him. Better wait six months, Carew, and be accepted, than to ask to-morrow and be refused.’

Sir Bernard looked perfectly contented with

himself. He did not share Sir Arthur's fear of being rejected. That was a contingency he never thought of. He did not imagine the possibility of Miss O'Neill refusing him. However, he replied :—

‘Thanks again, my dear sir, as you are good enough to be my friend, I will be entirely guided by your advice. I may tell you that my father left me the estate free from all incumbrances.’

‘I am glad to hear it,’ replied Sir Arthur, ‘It's not every man in Ireland can boast that he has a clear rent roll, but if I might offer a suggestion, I would advise you to say nothing to my niece about your property. She is a singular girl, with some strange ideas of her own. In my opinion a man without a shilling would have the best chance with her. She has refused some large fortunes already.’

Sir Bernard smiled as if he thought Sir Arthur's last remarks anything but a compliment to the intelligence of his niece.

‘I think it only fair to tell you,’ Sir Arthur

continued, 'that she has heard some rumours to your prejudice. But we must get over that. I know that you and Eugene were sad dogs at Oxford. He dipped me deeply I can tell you. Still let bygones be bygones. I have nothing to complain of in him since.'

'You are right, Sir Arthur, we went at a fearful pace, but I was more to blame than Eugene. I am sorry for it now. All the differences with my father were caused by my folly then. I wish he had been as merciful to me as you have been to Eugene!' Sir Bernard said sadly. 'He refused to be reconciled to me.'

'Ah well, we cannot recall the past,' Sir Arthur said; 'the future, however is before us, let us take care how we use it. There, the dogs are off!' and they put spurs to their horses and followed the hounds, which were already in full cry.

Sir Bernard returned to Hare Court that evening, highly satisfied with his day's sport, and with the result of his conference with Sir

Arthur O'Neill. Having gained his approval he saw no serious obstacle to the fulfilment of his wishes. He sat down to dinner in great good humour, and, in flowing glasses of champagne drank the health of his future bride. As the wine rapidly circulated, his spirits rose; and, forgetting his altercation with Flood the night before, he asked the captain to congratulate him upon his good fortune.

'Come, Flood, you must object no longer. The old fellow is won over; the girl will not be coy. I'll lay you a hundred to ten that this day six months Helen O'Neill will be my wife; and with her income added to mine I may snap my fingers at the malignant Fates. You shall have no reason to be sorry for the bargain.'

'In that case,' said Flood, 'I drink to your success. I knew when you came to think the matter over you would not be unreasonable.'

They both sat long over the bottle and drank deeply. Sir Bernard rose at length and walked across the room with unsteady gait, leaving the captain still at his potations. The baronet

went out to smoke his cigar in the cool night air. He turned to the right of the court; and as he was walking through a shrubbery that led to the gardens, he saw something shining on the ground; he lurched forward as he stooped to pick it up, and found it was a small square leather pocket-book with a broad steel clasp, which he remembered having seen with Flood years ago.

The sight of the book and the associations which it recalled sobered him in an instant. Looking nervously round to see that he was not observed, he thrust it into his pocket, and quickly retraced his steps to the house. He found the hall door ajar as he had left it, and glided in. Noiselessly he ascended the staircase to his bedroom and locked the door.

With trembling hands he unfastened the clasp of the pocket-book, and began to examine its contents. In the inside pocket he found two letters all chafed and worn at the edges, addressed in his own handwriting. Along with them was an envelope containing three

slips of paper, at the sight of which he staggered and grew deadly pale. The perspiration burst from him as he gasped, 'Great Heavens! how did he obtain these? But the other two, the most important of all—where are they?' And he hastily turned over the leaves of the diary, and searched all the pockets, but the missing documents were not in them.

While he was thus engaged, a horrible feeling of apprehension seized him, that Flood would miss the pocket-book, go in search of it, and come upon him while he was examining it. He held his breath and listened for his footsteps on the stairs; but his fear was groundless—there was no sound. Again he searched the book for the coveted papers, but in vain. Lest they might be concealed in the outside leather back, he slit it open with a razor; but they were not there.

Then he went over to the fireplace, and, lighting the papers in the candle, saw them consume on the hearth. He burned the envelope also which contained them and the two

letters, and finally he tore out the diary. Before setting fire to the latter he turned over its leaves again. It contained few entries, and those of no importance; but one on the second page attracted his attention: it ran thus:—
'Mem. Important. T. W. S. Smith's Coffee-house, Strand, Lon.' This he copied on a visiting card.

His next thought was, what to do with the leather back? He could not burn it, for Flood might smell the burning leather. Where could he hide it? Nowhere would it be safe if its owner suspected that he had found it; he would search for it with the sagacity of a blood-hound. Even the paper ashes under the grate would be a dangerous clue to leave. Suddenly an idea struck him. He tore off a piece of a newspaper that was lying on his dressing-table, went down on his knees and carefully collected the ashes of the burnt papers, and placed them in it. Then he put the cover of the pocket-book in his pocket, unlocked his door, and softly descended the stairs. As he passed the dining-room, he

saw through the half-open door that Flood's head had fallen forward on the table : he was asleep.

The door was still open and Sir Bernard passed out, and rapidly walked up the avenue. Before he came to the lodge he turned to the left, and struck across the fields to where a lime-kiln was burning, and into the kiln he flung the paper parcel and the leather back of the pocket-book. 'I think,' he said aloud, 'Flood will have some difficulty in finding them there !' and he gave a great sigh of relief.

'Don't be too sure of that !' cried a voice behind him, and turning suddenly round, Sir Bernard found himself face to face with Captain Flood.

When he returned to Hare Court that night, the baronet was alone. Having gained his bed-room without being seen, he hid away his torn coat and shirt in a drawer, and locked it ; carefully dusted the lime from his boots, and then looked out gloomily upon the night :

The next morning Captain Flood did not

come down to breakfast. Sir Bernard sent the servant to say he wanted to speak to him on particular business before he went out. The man soon returned and said that he had knocked at the captain's door, but got no answer. He knocked again more loudly, still no reply. After knocking a third time he turned the handle of his door, and went into the room. The room was empty. The bed had not been slept in. The captain's things were all there undisturbed. Sir Bernard rose from the table and rang the bell violently. He looked very resolute but very pale. The servants were all summoned, and questioned, but none of them had seen Captain Flood that day. The under-butler had seen him late the night before, when he left him asleep in dining-room. He thought the captain had gone to bed. Hot water had been left at his door that morning as usual. None of the housemaids had seen him either enter or leave his room. Inquiries made of the gardeners, gate-keepers, and labourers were equally without result.

CHAPTER VI.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

THE sudden and mysterious disappearance of Captain Flood caused a great sensation, and furnished a copious theme for the gossips at Hare Court and the county at large. When his examination of the servants failed to elicit any information respecting the missing man, Sir Bernard Carew, followed by the butler, and half-a-dozen female domestics, proceeded forthwith to the captain's bed-room. Everything was in its place. His clothes were all in order in the wardrobe; his silver-mounted dressing-case lay on the toilet table with the key in it. This Sir Bernard locked, and put the key in his pocket. The bed had not been disturbed, and the water in the captain's bath-room had not been used. Even his overcoat was left hanging in the hall.

They were all loud in their expressions of wonder and astonishment, especially the females. Sir Bernard was troubled and nervous. He looked inquiringly from one servant to another, but they could give him no clue ; they were as much amazed and as ignorant on the subject as their master.

‘ What can have become of him ? ’ cried the baronet. ‘ He must be somewhere ; some one must have seen him. The ground couldn’t have opened and swallowed him.’

And again Sir Bernard repeated his inquiries, but the servants gave him the same answers as before. Messengers were despatched in every direction in search of the captain. At the head of his whole establishment Sir Bernard sallied forth to look for him. The stables, coach-houses, farm-yards, gardens, shrubberies, summer-houses, pleasure grounds, and the adjoining woods, were all carefully searched, but in vain. No hiding place was overlooked ; every spot where a man could be concealed was explored,—but without result.

Then Sir Bernard ordered the river to be dragged. The captain had not been seen near the river; still, the baronet gave his directions that the drags should be at once obtained, and set to work. No expense, he said, should be spared; no chance left untried, and soon half-a-dozen boats were busy with drags for miles above and below Hare Court. Sir Bernard's bailiffs went round to the tenants on the estate asking for their assistance in looking for Captain Flood.

Information was sent to all the police barracks in the county: printed bills, describing Captain Flood's appearance, and offering a reward of fifty pounds for intelligence respecting him, were posted on the gates of all the churches and chapels, on public-houses, and at country cross-roads. Advertisements to the same effect were inserted in the local journals, and in a few days a long paragraph, headed 'Mysterious disappearance of a gentleman,' went the round of all the newspapers. But although Sir Bernard was indefatigable in his efforts, lavished

money freely, worked night and day, so that he began to look pale and care-worn, and offered all kinds of suggestions to those engaged in the search, his exertions were unsuccessful—no trace of the missing captain could be found. The public curiosity on the subject seemed insatiable, and became the more clamorous because it could not be gratified. Hare Court was inundated with visitors, who had heard the strange story, and were anxious to learn the full particulars from Sir Bernard himself. Almost one of the first to call and satisfy his curiosity was Sir Arthur O'Neill. The tale which Sir Bernard told to him, he told substantially to all.

‘We dined rather later than usual that evening,’ said the latter, ‘and sat some time over our wine. To be candid with you, Sir Arthur, I was a little elated on account of the conversation I had with you in the morning, and took, perhaps, more than was good for me. I left Flood at the table and went out to have a cigar in the grounds. I remained out about half-an-

hour, more or less, and then, feeling tired, went directly to bed. I did not see the captain again that night ; the next morning he was gone, and I have not heard of him since. From all I can learn no one, except Kelly, saw him after I left him at the table. The butler found the room empty.. He seems to have vanished, as if he had flown away. Strange affair, isn't it ?'

'A most extraordinary story as ever I heard,' Sir Arthur replied. 'Have you missed any jewelry or money ? title-deeds, or anything of that sort ?'

'Not a thing. He left all his own things behind him ; some of them valuable, too.'

'Is your bank account quite right ? Take care he has not been there.'

'No. That was one of the first things I thought of. But I found the bank all right.'

'What could have been his motive for leaving then ? Was he in your debt ?'

'Can't tell for the life of me. He certainly did owe me money. That couldn't have been his reason for going though : for I never pressed

him for payment; didn't even ask him for it. I have given him sums of money from time to time, but more as gifts than loans. He had some little means of his own, but not enough to live on. He was very useful to me in many ways, and I did not like to take his time and services for nothing. No, so far as I can see, he had no motive to leave this, but every motive to remain. Where else could he have been as comfortable? That's what puzzles me. Even if he did go, how did he manage to get away without anyone seeing him? If he had wished to leave the country, he could easily have made excuses to get to a seaport. There's some mystery, depend upon it.'

'Had he any enemy? Was there any danger impending over him?' Sir Arthur asked.

'Not that I'm aware of. I have heard him drop hints about some woman being in question: nothing more.'

'What do you think? do you suspect anything?' was Sir Arthur's next question.

‘I don’t know what to think, Sir Arthur. I have suspicions, and yet I don’t know whom, or what to suspect. I am in a maze without the clue to guide me out.’

‘It is a queer business. Have you informed his friends?’

‘He has no friends or relations that I know of. I never heard him speak of any.’

‘Have any strangers made inquiries about him?’

‘None. I am the only person that has taken that trouble. Poor fellow! I am all anxiety to know what has become of him.’

Could he have made away with himself? Perhaps he is in the river.’ Sir Arthur suggested.

‘I think not. He was never low-spirited; didn’t know what melancholy meant. I should never suspect him of committing suicide, and although I have men searching in the river, I don’t expect they will find him there,’ Sir Bernard replied.

‘Well,’ said Sir Arthur, as he rode away, ‘I

what's left of me. And this,' he added, introducing his companion, 'is my friend Butler. I feel it a matter of duty to make him known to you, L'Estrange. Mr. Butler,—Mr. L'Estrange, the Father of the Undergraduates. Our guide, philosopher, and friend.'

'Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Butler,' said L'Estrange. 'Sorry I had not the pleasure of knowing you before. But our friend O'Neill here has just done me an injustice. The friend of the Undergraduates I am, but not, alas! their philosopher and guide.'

'And a precious guide you'd make,' cried a pale, thin young student, named Kyle. 'If we were to mind the rubbish you have been stuffing into us all the morning.'

'Why?' asked O'Neill, amused at the scornful expression of the last speaker's countenance. 'What's the row?'

'Row, indeed! you may well say row,' answered Kyle. 'Why, he has been preaching the last two hours upon the good of getting into debt, and the evil of getting out of it, and

that any College man who pays a tradesman is the enemy of the human race. That's what he was saying when you came in. Guide, indeed! Oh, Lord.'

'Ungrateful monster,' said L'Estrange, reproachfully, 'whom I warmed in my breast, and who now turns round and like a viper stings me. If I preach, I enforce my precept by my example; and you can say of me what you can say of very few preachers, that I practise what I preach. No one can deny me that merit.'

'Begad you do,' said O'Neill, handing Butler a glass of Bass and helping himself to another at the same time; 'no doubt about that. I move that L'Estrange goes on with his sermon. If not very moral, it's sure to be original. Where are the fusees?'

'I second the motion,' said another, and shouts of 'Hear, hear,' carried it with acclamation.

'Gentlemen,' said L'Estrange 'you do me too much honour,' and, handing his cigar-case to Butler, 'Have a cigar?'

‘No, thank you,’ said Butler. ‘I don’t smoke.’

‘Not smoke! Is it possible? You surprise me. I thought everybody smoked, and these are real Habanas. I hope smoking is not disagreeable to you?’

‘Not in the least,’ was the reply.’

‘No, gentlemen,’ continued the host, resuming his smoking-cap, ‘I have no sermon to go on with. I was only remarking on the villany of mankind in general, and of tradesmen in particular, and that I looked upon myself as a special instrument in the hand of Providence to punish the rapacity of glovers, tailors, bootmakers, and hatters, whom, together with Jews and jewellers, I look upon as the natural enemies of Undergraduates, and I may say, of mankind. I speak now not from hearsay, but from experience—from a painful knowledge of facts. I have only too good reason to know what these wretches are.’

‘And you punish them by never paying them, don’t you?’ interrupted Kyle.

‘Well, if you put it in that vulgar and offensive manner, yes. You see, gentlemen, little Kyle here is fresh from his mother’s apron-strings, and from the Sunday School, and his head is filled with Goody Two-shoe maxims and commonplace platitudes about patience and perseverance, industry and honesty, and all the vulgar virtues, which he has been writing as head-lines in his copybooks. And he as yet believes in them. I do not; never did. A little experience of the world will soon cure him.’

‘Hear him! hear him!’ cried Kyle, derisively, but getting very red in the face at the same time.

‘Patience’ resumed the orator, ‘is a quality, thank the Fates, that I never possessed. Perseverance may do very well for a sweep or a tallow-chandler, but what has a gentleman to do with it? My old tutor used to say to me, by way of encouragement, when I was dull at my lessons, “Patience and perseverance will bring a snail to Jerusalem.” But I never saw any encouragement or force in it, for two rea-

sons. First, the snail would be a precious long time going to that renowned city; and, in the second place, I am not a snail—at least, I should hope not. As for industry, I scorn it. I never did a stroke of work in my life, and, what is more, I never mean to.

‘Labour was imposed on Adam as a curse, and no lapse of time can transmute a curse into a blessing. I go in therefore for idleness. I know you may quote the nursery rhyme against me, “Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.” If so, Satan’s hands are not idle; they are pretty busy, I can tell you. I differ from Dr. Watts. He says one thing; I say another. The authorities balance each other. Why should I work? My business is to enjoy, to taste the moment as it passes, fling sorrow to the winds, and say, “Begone dull care.” My three golden rules of life are,—never to do anything I can avoid, never to do to-day what I can put off until to-morrow, and never to do myself what I can get anyone else to do for me.’

'Good, good! Go on, go on,' cried several voices.

"*Laborare est orare*," murmured Butler, in a low voice.

'I know,' replied the speaker "To labour is to pray." It was one of the Latin fathers said that, St. Augustine, if I remember rightly. We don't admit his authority; he was a papist. I belong to the orthodox church. So let him pass.'

'You don't believe that "Honesty is the best policy" either, I suppose,' said Kyle, from behind a cloud of tobacco smoke.

'Not a word of it. Greatest mistake in the world. Gentlemen, another of Kyle's Sunday-school phrases, you perceive. And what an intensely vulgar saying! The "best policy;" mark that. Not honesty for its own sake, which one could respect if it existed at all, but for the sake of the profit it brings; honesty, as a matter of calculation, a question of expediency, a vile rule of profit and loss. Away with it!' cried the speaker, warmed by his

own enthusiasm. 'Honesty! There's no such thing. It is one of those canting phrases with which fools are deluded, but which all wise men despise. Honesty! Where is it? where does it exist? "An honest man's the noblest work of God." Yes, certainly, if the honest man exists at all. But where shall he be found? where shall we look for him? Am I honest? Are you? Will anyone say that this poor little Kyle is?

'Is the lawyer honest? He will take your fee, and move heaven and earth to prove white black, and to make out black white. Is he honest? Is the doctor honest? He tells you there is hope, when death has already clutched you, and the grave is yawning at your feet, and day after day he prescribes his useless nostrums and talks of improvement, only that he may continue to delude and reap his golden harvest. Is he honest? Psha!

'Is the Archbishop of this city honest? He gets £15,000 a-year for doing nothing. There are hundreds of others richly paid for helping

him. His princely income is wrung from a poor, miserable, starving peasantry. His plea is that of Shylock, the law awards it, and he claims his bond. Does that make it right? Is he honest? Are they?

‘Is the Lord-Lieutenant honest? No one knows better than my Lord Tournament, what a sham himself, and his mock court, and his law advisers, and his whole parody of royalty, are, yet he keeps it up, and drivels about fat bullocks and the prosperity of Ireland, while the island is being stripped of its only remaining wealth—its people, as if by the plague. Is he honest?

‘Are the corporations, the clergy, and the public bodies who come up with their fulsome and lying addresses to him, and who delight to prove what little decency and manhood they possess, and who grovel before this tinsel king, and are ready to eat the very dirt from his feet, I should like to know, are they honest?

‘Are the tradesmen of whom I have already

spoken, who fawn and flatter, and cringe before their rich customers. are saucy and impudent to poor ones, who force their goods where they are not wanted, at exorbitant rates of profit, and then clamour for payment; are they honest? Is the landlord who allows his tenant to improve his farm, and then robs him of his capital and labour, and charges him for his own improvements; is he honest?

‘Am I honest? I have poor tenants who labour from year’s end to year’s end, that I may go clothed in silk and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. I take the fruit of their labour; they do not enjoy it. What right have I to it? Am I honest? Diogenes might walk through the streets of Dublin, as he walked through the streets of Athens, in search of an honest man, and not find him. That, all badinage apart, is my humble opinion.

‘We are rogues all. Do I blame these several parties? Not at all. They are only following their instincts. It is the old story of the strong preying upon the weak. Might

is right. And in practising this universal roguery men are only carrying out the great end of their creation. And so ends my sermon.' The orator was rewarded with loud and enthusiastic applause.

'You are impartial enough in your verdict, at all events,' said Butler, laughing. 'You include yourself amongst the rogues.'

'Certainly. I claim no exemption for myself. I freely admit my fault, if fault it be. I suppose I am a fair specimen of society. I make no pretensions to honesty myself, and hate all such pretensions in other people. And now I am thirsty; let's have an unfathomable drink.'

'Well, Butler, this is something new to you,' said O'Neill. 'What do you think of L'Estrange's sermon?'

'I don't know,' answered Butler, 'whether the preacher is serious or not. I can only say that I have heard sermons before now with a great deal less truth, and a great deal more falsehood in them than that which we have just listened to.'

‘Serious!’ exclaimed L’Estrange. ‘My dear fellow, I was never more serious in all my life; I always am serious; joking is not my line. If you want the comic, you must go to O’Grady here for it, who, although he is present, I will say it, sings incomparably the best song of any man in College. And that reminds me that a few fellows are coming to my rooms to-night. O’Neill, I know you will come, and, I hope, your friend Butler (bowing to him) will not think it *infra dig.* to join us, and give us the pleasure of his company.’

‘The old set, I suppose?’ inquired O’Neill. ‘Yes, Butler must come, if only for the fun of the thing. I’ll promise for both.’

‘You must know, Butler,’ said L’Estrange, ‘that we call ourselves the “Jokers,” though for what reason I can’t guess; for I never heard a good joke yet from one of the set. Attempts at bad ones we have had like the sand upon the sea shore, innumerable. Now I must go dress for dinner; and so, until to-night,

addio all. Look in about nine, or a little later.' And they separated.

While the preceding conversation was going on, Butler had time to notice the furniture and ornaments of L'Estrange's rooms. He was obliged to admit to himself the perfect taste with which they were furnished and arranged. He admired the solid, yet simple comfort which they displayed. The neatness, the elegance, and the luxury visible formed a marked contrast to the poverty, the slovenliness, and discomfort of College chambers in general. A rich Brussels carpet covered the floor; the steel fender, fire-irons, and grate were as bright as oil and sand-paper could make them, and they shone and glittered in the blaze.

A massive round table was in the centre of the room, and scattered around were arm-chairs and sofas of various shapes and designs. One side of the room was occupied by a large mahogany bookcase with glass doors, filled with volumes in every style of binding. Op-

posite to it was a quaintly-carved sideboard of Irish bog-oak, on which stood two moderate lamps, wine coolers, a *garde du vin*, and a silver breakfast service. A large mirror reached from the mantelpiece to the ceiling; and round the walls were hung half-a-dozen first-class engravings in gorgeous frames. A French bronze clock of exquisite design chimed the time on the mantelpiece; Venetian blinds were to the windows, from which hung scarlet silk curtains, and which gave a grateful glow of warm colour to the room.

Through an open door was visible a small mahogany French bedstead covered with a spotless Marseilles quilt; and close to it stood a dressing-table laden with perfume bottles and every conceivable luxury of the toilet. In one corner of the bed-room was a shower-bath, and in the other a hip-bath; at the foot of the bed was a large cheval glass—all in perfect order and scrupulously clean.

If the door next to the bedroom had been opened, Butler would have seen a

chamber of about the same size, which the luxurious owner, for want of a better, had turned into a mixed lumber-room and wine cellar. In the centre was half a barrel of bitter beer on draught; and around the room—the windows of which were generally kept closed — were arranged cases of hock, Burgundy, port, claret, sherry, Madeira, and champagne; some dozen pairs of boots and shoes filled shelves on one side, and on the other were glasses, claret jugs, decanters, and other articles essential to a bachelor's comfortable quarters.

‘What do you think of our new acquaintance?’ was the first question O'Neill asked Butler as they left L'Estrange's rooms. ‘He's an odd character, isn't he?’

‘Odd! yes!’ was the reply. ‘I scarcely know what to think of him on so short an acquaintance. But I fancied there was a tone of bitterness and contempt, if not of disappointment, in some of the remarks he made just now, and that the air of assumed badinage but ill

concealed the real feelings under which he spoke. His eye at times had an expression in it very different from that of a man who was indulging in chaff. I should like to know something of his real history. Who and what is he ?

‘I can tell you all about him,’ replied O’Neill. ‘He is the nephew of old L’Estrange of The Grange, near our place at home. Father and mother both dead. Property involved, somehow, and in Chancery : in fact, I believe he’s yet a ward, and that the Chancellor allows him so much a-year : has been in College these eight years : was plucked a dozen times or more : three years trying to get through with his “Little go.” Even yet he is only a junior Soph. : his friends say he means to live and die here. Now you know as much about him as I do myself.

‘Stop though ! I had forgotten one thing. It is said he was mixed up with the rebels in ’48 : that he was president of the Students’ Club, and proposed some desperate measure, for

he was informed against, and was brought before the board of visitors. The informer, whoever he was, had not the courage to appear. He resolutely refused to answer any question the Vice-Chancellor put to him. They were determined to expel him, but could prove nothing, and so dismissed him with a warning.'

'Ha! a rebel was he? Perhaps that may have something to do with it. Although I think not. But, depend upon it, there's something in the background which outsiders do not see. Perhaps he has had a love disappointment. If he has been plucked, it has not been for want of brains. There's stuff there: some noble elements of character in him, or I am much mistaken.'

'That's exactly what all his most intimate friends say of him,' responded O'Neill. 'I know two or three men who have the highest opinion of his abilities. He is one of the shrewdest judges of character I know. And no man has more devoted friends than he. It is quite amusing to hear the way in which some

of the fellows speak of him. To hear their accounts, you would think he was a genius. He is a universal favourite. Even the examiners who pluck him speak well of him.'

'He is a most luxuriant dog,' rejoined Butler. 'Did you notice the comfort and elegance and taste with which he has furnished his rooms? They are chambers, if you like. The man must be a perfect Sybarite.'

'So well he may,' answered O'Neill. 'You and I could furnish our rooms in a manner still more costly and luxurious if we proceeded upon his plan.'

'What is that?' inquired Butler.

'To order everything and pay for nothing. He was not joking when he said he practised what he preached. So he does: and with a vengeance. He sails the fastest and trimmest yacht in Kingstown: he rides the finest horse at the hunt: he wears the most fashionable clothes: drinks the choicest wines: eats the best dinners: smokes the finest cigars: sports the dearest jewelry, and, as you will admit to-night,

gives the best parties of any man in Dublin without its costing him a shilling. It's easy for him to be a swell, and do the generous and magnificent; so could I if I had his advantages.'

'Not cost a shilling?' said Butler. 'Why, what do you mean?'

'What I say,' answered O'Neill. 'He gets all these things on credit. Since he entered College, eight years ago, he has never paid anyone a farthing; not even the milkman. There is not a shop in Grafton Street or Dame Street, that he is not up to his eyes in debt to. You should see and hear him hold a levée of his duns some day. That is a spectacle for gods and men. He may well have handsome furniture and costly works of art, when he can get them so easily.'

'But how utterly dishonourable of him not to pay his debts,' remarked Butler.

'Not exactly dishonourable,' replied O'Neill. 'That is too strong a word. You might truly say how reckless of him, because he knows full

well and so do they, that they will be paid sooner or later, and with heavy interest too; leave them alone for that.'

'I wonder they do not sue him,' said Butler.

'What would they gain by that?' rejoined O'Neill, 'They know they are sure of their money. They have only to wait, and do wait. If they sued him, he would soon teach them the difference. Brown, the bootmaker in Westmoreland Street, did send him a writ two years ago for the amount of his account. What was the result? In twelve months afterwards Brown himself was in the Gazette—hopelessly bankrupt.'

'How was that?' asked Butler.

'Why, you see,' said O'Neill, 'Brown's trade lay almost exclusively with the students, and the officers of the garrison, and the officials at the Castle. L'Estrange knows every mother's soul of them. So when he got the writ, he quietly told all his acquaintances of the transaction. They could not think of patronizing the man who had insulted their friend. Brown's

trade fell off, he lost all his fashionable customers : his expenses were heavy : and in twelve months he was a bankrupt.'

'But that was a cruel thing to do,' said Butler, indignantly, 'I shall not like him now.'

'I think that was not Brown's only offence,' said O'Neill. 'It seems that in '48 this Brown, who was a rampant Orangeman, was the foreman of the jury that tried and convicted one of the Students' Club named Darling, a bosom friend of L'Estrange's, and who was transported for fourteen years. Brown was one day boasting in his shop of the part he had taken in this trial, and L'Estrange heard him, and vowed vengeance. So that he had to suffer for the double offence of transporting L'Estrange's friend, and sending himself a writ.'

'The reason then why his creditors do not press him is, that they are afraid of him,' said Butler.

'I expect that's about it. "L'Estrange," they say to themselves, "is a man of fashion—a man

about town ; he knows everybody ; everybody knows him ; he is constantly out at balls and parties ; he is a connoisseur and a man of taste ; he has a large circle of town acquaintances ; and an endless number of country female cousins ; he goes shopping with them ; they all look up to him ; they all rely on his judgment and good taste ; their cry is, 'Cousin Godfrey, where shall we buy this?' and 'Cousin Godfrey, where shall we go for that and the other?' They do whatever he tells them ; go wherever he bids them. It would never do to make such a man an enemy of the house, so let his little account stand. Don't press him for it."'

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CHAPTER VIII.

A COLLEGE PARTY.

‘WHAT did you think of the “spread,” last night?’ inquired O’Neill of Butler, the morning after L’Estrange’s party.

‘Do you ask me about the “spread” itself, or of the men at it?’

‘Of both. I should like to hear your opinion of the whole performance.’

‘The supper was first-rate, and the wines, as far as I am able to judge, capital.’

‘Wasn’t it a “spread!” None of the other fellows in College can do anything like it. In splendid hospitality L’Estrange surpasses them all.’

‘Does he usually entertain his friends in the same lavish style?’ Butler asked.

‘Generally. But I fancy he went to a little extra trouble last night on your account. In-

deed he confessed as much to me. He is half afraid of you, partly because of the way he has heard me speak of you.'

'Afraid of me!' Butler exclaimed. 'More fool he. Everything was in style, certainly. The only fault I had to find was, that the profusion and extravagance of the feast amount to positive waste. A third was not consumed.'

'He likes that abundance and profusion, or, as you call it, waste: if L'Estrange had money he would spend it like a prince.'

'For a man who has no money he gave you pretty fair supplies last night.'

'Rather! What a lot of things we had: oysters, lobster salad, ham and chickens, tongue, salmon mayonaise, brawn, pigeon pie, game pie, creams, jellies, sweets and fruit. Those grapes cost four shillings a pound, and those huge French pears five shillings each. One such party would put me into the Bankruptcy Court,' said O'Neill. 'Then what an abundance and variety of drinks,' he added. 'A man might get drunk on what-

ever he pleased, and without mixing his drinks too.'

'What surprised me most of all was where the things came from,' remarked Butler. 'That pantry never contained them all, and unless they were brought in through the window, I know not how the supplies were kept up.'

'Yes! they were all there,' rejoined O'Neill. 'L'Estrange is great in the Commissariat department. He has all kinds of ingenious contrivances in that room. That pantry has often reminded me of the conjuror's inexhaustible bottle.'

'And like the conjuror's bottle last night it supplied you with all manner of wines. Did you notice the evident gusto with which the host mixed the claret cup? I was amused at the importance he attached to it.'

'Often. That is one of the few articles in his creed. He believes that he can mix a claret or champagne cup with any man in Europe.'

'And drink them with equal skill, I suppose,' Butler answered, laughingly.

‘No; you are wrong there,’ said O’Neill. ‘L’Estrange is a moderate drinker. I have seldom known him go beyond two or three bottles of claret of an evening. And he always has such capital wine.’

‘You call three bottles of claret a moderate allowance, do you?’

‘Certainly. I’d think nothing myself of half-a-dozen. No amount of good claret will do a man any harm.’

‘In that case I acted wisely last night,’ remarked Butler, ‘for I drank nothing else. I remembered your injunction, not to mix my drinks.’

‘Right. Some of the other men did mix them. You saw the result.’

‘True. But the men you speak of did not drink claret, they devoted themselves to the strong waters. I fancy there were more bottles of brandy and whisky than of wine consumed last night.’

‘Always are. Wine does not intoxicate them fast enough, the whisky does, and they are soon under the table.’

‘Are all your College parties like the one I witnessed last night?’

‘No, by Jove! I wish they were. Last night was a feast of the gods. Some College parties are dreadful. I mean as far as drinking goes. It’s not every man can afford claret and champagne, and grapes at four shillings a pound,’ O’Neill replied.

‘I am not speaking now of the supper or the wines, I mean as to the intellectual part of the entertainment,’ said Butler.

‘Oh, so far as that is concerned they are all pretty much alike.’

‘The conversation was neither wise nor witty. The speeches were tame and dull. The only good things were said by yourself and L’Estrange. The others seemed to me as commonplace a set of men as ever I met. With the exception of Daly’s singing—and he does sing beautifully—it was a very flat affair. When they got drunk and noisy, it became intolerable.’

‘In that respect they are all alike. You

are quite right, it was a dull affair. You have as good an idea now of College parties as if you had been at a hundred. In fact, when you have been at one you have seen them all; when you have heard one set of speeches you have heard them all. The same routine is gone through on every occasion. Everybody proposes everybody else's health, and everybody responds in the same kind of speech, and after every toast everybody sings, "For he is a jolly good fellow;" it's invariably followed by "'Tis a way we have in the army," &c. And everybody makes the same desperate jokes, and tries to be witty, and fails. The same puns are repeated, and the same stories told; and so it goes on hour after hour, until the fellows are all drunk, and can joke or attempt to joke no more.'

'Yet stupid as you admit they are, you continue to go to them.'

'I go. But for the dulness and the sameness I console myself with beer.'

'I thought at one time there was going to

be a row between little Kyle and Cronin. What was it all about?,' asked Butler.

'Oh, the little beggars. They have been going on in that way these twelve months. They quarrel at every party they meet, and have been playing at duelling, sending each other hostile messages; seconds going backwards and forwards between them, until at length they have become a regular nuisance, and when I heard them beginning at it last night again, I got so riled, I whispered in their ears that if I heard them say another word on the subject, I'd fling them both out through the window. That soon sobered them: they grew quiet instantly,' answered O'Neill. 'I was so wroth, if they had not, I'd have done it.'

'Was that it? I wondered that they ceased wrangling the moment you spoke to them.'

'Yes: They think it a grand thing to talk of fighting a duel, and vindicating their honour, and all that. It gives them importance, they think, by making them the topic of conversation. They won't venture on that game again

in my presence, the intolerable little snobs. If Kyle growls again where I am, I'll take him by the nape of the neck and put him under the pump. That's how I'll serve him. The fellow is always buzzing about like a wasp.'

'Take care,' said Butler, 'he may challenge you.'

'Kyle challenge me !' cried O'Neill. 'That is a good one. It makes me laugh.' And he gave a great hearty guffaw.

'If he were to send you a hostile message, what would you do ?'

'Do. I'd take him as a mother takes a naughty child, put him across my knee, and with my open hand, chastise him on his least honourable part.'

'Gleeson was making rather a good speech last night, when you stopped him. Why did you drag him down into his seat in that abrupt way ?'

'Because we could not help it.'

'Why not? I don't understand. Explain.'

'The first night I met Gleeson, three years ago, I heard him make exactly the same speech

you heard from him last night, and saw him pulled down in just the same way. I said to a man next me, "Why do you pull him down in that manner? why don't you let him go on?" "Let him go on," he said, "God bless you, man, he would go on till morning," and they dragged him down by the coat tails.

'Since then, I have heard him make the same speech over and over again, at every party where I have been. It is a fair speech enough up to a certain point; what the speech might be if he were allowed to finish, no one can tell, for he is never allowed to go beyond that point. He gets ten minutes by the watch, and not one minute more: the instant he gets to the dining-hall in his speech: "I look around this hall on the portraits of the illustrious men this ancient University has produced" —there he is stopped. No sooner does he pronounce the words this "ancient University," than his coat tails are seized, and in spite of all his prayers and entreaties to be allowed to finish the sentence, he is remorselessly dragged down.

‘A ludicrous figure he presents half-bent over the table, with his hands spread out beseechingly, ere he succumbs to his fate,’ remarked Butler, laughingly. ‘I thought it rather hard that he was not allowed to finish his sentence, but now I understand the reason why they were so stern with him.’

‘Formerly,’ said O’Neill, ‘he was in the habit of reciting the speech of Antony over Cæsar, and Hamlet’s soliloquy, but he bellowed them so loudly, that he could be heard in College Green, and the Junior Dean came one night with two porters to inquire what the shouting meant, and ordered it to cease; from that time we have never allowed him to recite, but he goes out to the Phoenix Park, and standing in the centre of the Fifteen Acres, revenges himself on the deer. He bellows like a bull.’

‘It’s hard lines on him, you allow him neither to speak nor recite.’

‘He takes it out of us at billiards, at least he does out of me. He always gets me to drink

lots of beer or grog before we play, and will not drink himself on one excuse or another, and then I get careless and miss my strokes ; he won four pounds from me in that way last week. I can beat him at fair play of a morning, but he always manages to win the money. When he clears me out, he pays for what I drink ; it is understood that whoever wins pays, and then he talks of it. I'll play no more with him.'

'A very wise resolution, if you will only keep to it. Who is this Mullony, the man with the red eyes and hair, that you chaffed about changing his religion ?' Butler asked. 'He seems a comical character.'

'What a recluse you must be not to know all about Mullony ! Comical fellow he is, and no mistake. He is as well known in College and out of it as Morrissey the porter. Comical is not exactly the phrase either. It would fill a volume to describe Mullony, and do justice to his genius, eccentricities, peculiarities, and whims. He is the oddest character I know. When you heard me, I was asking him what

religion he was of now. I have known him change his religion every week, and that's oftener than he changes his shirts. He is everything by turns and nothing long. He has belonged to the High Church, the Low Church, the Broad Church, and the No Church. He has been an Arminian and a Calvinist. He has joined and left in succession the Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Quakers. One week he is a Unitarian, another a Roman Catholic. He has been a Turk, a Pagan, and a Jew. Last week he was a Muggletonian, this week he raves about Hegel, and believes in the Gospel according to Harriet Martineau, next week he will believe in Mormonism, and the Gospel according to Joe Smith.

“Mullony,” I said to him last night, “what religion do you profess now? what church is so blessed as to number you amongst her votaries?”

“I belong to no church, O'Neill,” he answered, “if by church you mean a superstitious and

absurd faith in the supernatural; there is no supernatural. "Humanity," as Comte says, "must be our only God. We must idealize the race and worship each other," and as he said this, he gravely blinked his red eyes and swayed himself backwards and forwards as you see the hyena do in the Zoological Gardens. "The worship of man by man," he added, "is the true philosophy, the only positive, rational religion."

"All right, Mullony," I said; "you may worship me as much as you like. I hope it may do you good. But I most strongly object to worship you, at least till you are sober, and have had a clean shave." He had a beard of a week's growth, and I don't think had washed his face all the time. He looked dirty, and greasy, and unkempt, and anything but a god to my taste.

"Ah, O'Neill!" he said, "if you would only read Hegel——" and here he poured out an incoherent rhapsody without sense or meaning.

"Stop," I cried, "for mercy's sake, and drink

this!" handing him a goblet of claret; "it will wash down that horrible unbaptized jargon and keep it from choking you;" he took the goblet, leered at me, and drained it to the last drop.'

'You were not very deferential in your treatment of his new faith, I see.'

'No; it's impossible to be serious with him. The man is so irresistibly funny and absurd. Every time I see him he has some fresh absurdity in his head, each more monstrous than the preceding. I never argue with him; I only laugh at him. Sometimes I fancy he is more rogue than fool, and that a good deal of all this is put on. He may be wearing a mask.

'Then he is a splendid linguist. Knows German as well as he knows English, and has all the bawdy poems of Heinrich Heine off by rote. A few days ago he translated into Greek "The Night Afore Larry Was Stretched." He has the most out-of-the-way knowledge on the strangest subjects, the most curious shreds and patches of information, and you cannot help wondering

where he picked them up, or how he became acquainted with them.'

'His appearance seemed to me peculiar, almost grotesque,' remarked Butler. 'I was surprised to see him in L'Estrange's room.'

'His appearance is not more peculiar and grotesque than his mind. Everything about him is incongruous, *bizarre*. I have seen him sometimes crossing the courts with his old gown in rags, hanging over a coat older and more ragged still; trousers frayed and jagged at the ends; his shoes down at heel, and his heels appearing through the ragged stockings; covered to the shoulders with mud; a very dirty shirt on, perhaps no shirt at all; and an old scholar's cap, crushed out of all its original shape, on his head. L'Estrange is fond of characters, and asks him for the fun of the thing. And, I must be just, he is an admirable quarry when properly worked.

'If he gets a prize in money or books, he suddenly blooms out in all the splendour of new clothes, with a flaming red necktie, and

a huge bouquet of flowers in his breast; he struts about in his new feathers for about three days, then sends the clothes to the pawn-shop, and reappears a different being in the old rags again. Or the moment he gets the money he suddenly disappears. No one can tell what has become of him, or where he has gone to: never comes near his rooms day nor night. His milkwoman knocks in despair at his door; but, about the tenth or twelfth day, he all as suddenly appears, generally without his shirt, but always with a new religion.

‘He never accounts for his absence on these occasions, or if very closely pressed for an explanation, he invents a story so utterly wild and improbable that the inquirer gives up the task in despair. From various pieces of evidence that have turned up, I strongly suspect that he is not away on a romantic expedition at such times, but may be found in one of the back streets or lanes, not far from Grafton Street or College Green.

‘His rooms are almost destitute of furniture.

He has one table, no carpet, and three chairs, one of them wanting a leg. He has a poker and fire shovel, but no tongs. He has a large iron kettle without a lid, an old coffee-pot without a handle, three broken tea-cups, one saucer, and a cream jug. That, I think, is a complete inventory of everything to be found in his sitting-room.'

'It must be a perfect contrast to L'Es-trange's,' remarked Butler.

'Complete. When Mullony is utterly reduced; when he is without a penny or the means of getting one; without a thing to eat or drink, do you know what he does?' O'Neill asked, triumphantly.

'I cannot give the least guess. Begs perhaps,' Butler answered.

'Not he. An ordinary man would beg. Mullony, however, has genius, and now exerts it. Beg, indeed! He gives a party.'

'How can he give a party if he has nothing for people to eat or drink?'

'There's where he displays the genius. He

goes round to all the men he knows, and asks them to come to his rooms to meet a few friends that evening. They comply. As his guests arrive, Mullony waylays them in the passage, and for each he has a different story. To me he says, "O'Neill, I find I have no tea or coffee or sugar; my grocer has not sent in my orders; lend me some, like a good fellow;" and I come back to my rooms for them. In the meantime some one else arrives, from whom he asks bread and butter in the same way, and so on; he gets whisky from one, beer from another; one man lends him plates, another knives and forks, another glasses, and, by the time the party is assembled, each man finds that he has brought his contributions for the "spread;" of course everyone knows he is done, and laughs at himself and his neighbours. The only one not victimized is the smiling host, who in this way has been known to get in a week's supplies together,—feeling all the time that he has spoiled the Egyptians. You might call it fraud. He thinks it

grand strategy, and all things are fair in love and war.'

'Is it possible?' Butler asked, with a smile.
'That is a master-stroke.'

'Yes; and it does not lessen, but increase the fun, especially when anything is wanted, and some fellow has to go to his rooms to fetch it. Some of the jolliest nights I have had in College, I have spent in this way in Mullony's rooms. "It's like one of Mullony's spreads" has passed already into a saying. The next he gives, you must come, and you will laugh to see the men going to this queer party, carrying plates, bread, glasses, bottles of whisky, &c., under their gowns. That is the glory and the fun of the whole thing.'

'Yes,' said Butler. 'I'll certainly go and take my contribution with me without being asked for it.'

'Very well. We shall enjoy it. But let me give you a hint. Do not lend him books; if you do—you understand?'

'Yes,' said Butler. 'I understand.'

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

‘MY dear fellow,’ said L’Estrange, addressing Butler, when they met together one day in O’Neill’s rooms, ‘why lecture me so seriously? It’s not of the least use. I do not require to be convinced. No one knows better than myself what a wretched, worthless life I am leading:’ and he walked coolly over to the fireplace, and knocked the ashes off his cigar.

‘Why not mend it, then?’ retorted Butler.

‘Ay; exactly: but that is my difficulty, to know how to mend it.’

‘Anything would be better than your present course. Why don’t you do something?’

‘Yes! But what am I to do? That’s what puzzles me. Only point out to me something worth doing, and I’ll do it. Unfortunately, I know nothing of farming, or I’d go home and

grow cabbages of monstrous size. Books, I do not care for. I have always found much study a weariness to the flesh. I can dance a little, at least so the girls tell me. I can follow the hounds, or sail a boat. I like billiards, and am a swell at cricket; but, I dare say, you would not consider these fit occupations for a lifetime.'

'A truce to jesting. Can you not be serious for once?'

'Ah! you are one of those dreadfully earnest men who look at things seriously. I am not. I see nothing worthy of being earnest about. What is there in life worth striving for? The more I see of the world the uglier it looks, and the less I like it.'

'You surely do not mean to say that you intend to lead the same idle life always, and waste your time and talents as you are now doing?' Butler said.

'Well, I don't know. We had an old game-keeper at home who once said to me, "Master Godfrey, if ever you are caught in a fog, or

benighted on a mountain or a moor, lie down where you are at once; for a step or two forward may take you over a precipice, or into a bog-hole." That is my present position. I am benighted, and fear to stir hand or foot, lest I should go wrong.'

'Best argument in favour of doing nothing, I ever heard,' interrupted O'Neill.

'I like to be idle,' L'Estrange continued. 'It suits me. Gives me the more time, you know, for thought. Besides, why should I do any work? I have no ambition. I would not raise a finger or turn a hair to accomplish the aims of all the fellows around me. I am not an actor, but only a spectator. I do not play myself, but I like to stand by, and amuse myself by watching the game and the players; and a poor paltry game it is.'

'Why do you not join some profession?' inquired Butler.

'A profession!' L'Estrange answered, as he looked up at Butler, with a curious expression in his face. 'Join a profession, which?'

‘But a man must do something, if it be only to keep himself from a madhouse.’

‘That is a matter of temperament. If the Great Seal was offered to me to-morrow I would not take it. If I were to be made Archbishop of Armagh for walking from this to King William in College Green, I would not move an inch of the way. If Her Majesty should send me a commission as Commander-in-Chief of the British army, I should respectfully decline it. That’s my idea of the professions.’

‘There : I told you so. He is incorrigible,’ O’Neill broke in, ‘perfectly hopeless.’

Butler was staggered. He had been foiled in his attack by this adroit fencer. He knew that he was right, but he felt that he had not the best of the argument, and that consideration did not increase his equanimity. Besides, had he not had misgivings on these very points himself? L’Estrange had only expressed in clear, strong language, the thoughts that had often passed through his own mind. While urging

him to join a profession, was he not uncertain what profession to choose himself?’

‘I am hopeless,’ L’Estrange replied, ‘and I know it. You don’t. I am older than either of you. I have had more experience of the world. I have been behind the scenes: I have seen the ropes pulled: I know all about the rouge, and the tinsel, and the mimic lightning, and the stage thunder. And, by Jove! I am disenchanted. Outsiders may be charmed with the lights and the music, and the *mise en scène*, but I am too *blasé* for that by a long way. I see nothing that I can respect: nothing that I can believe in—nothing. *Vive la bagatelle!*’

‘If I ever come to that state of mind,’ said Butler, ‘I shall commit suicide at once. Life on such conditions would be intolerable.’

‘I have been near committing suicide more than once. I have had the loaded pistol in my hand, ready to blow my brains out: but I thought better of it. That state of mind is a thing a man has to go through like the measles.

You may recover, but you are never the same after it,' L'Estrange rejoined.

'I believe you. I should think not indeed,' O'Neill added.

They were silent a few moments, and then L'Estrange resumed :

'You may wonder to hear me talking in this way; but all my early beliefs have long since vanished. The lessons and experience I learned in this venerable University soon banged them out of me; and they have left me neither a wiser nor a happier man. It seems to me now, that the only things worth living for are, a good dinner and a bottle of chateau Lafitte, a sail in a trim yacht before a spanking breeze, or a run with the Kilkenny hounds: as for the women, I agree with O'Neill, they are "an allegory."'

'That is the Epicurean philosophy a little exaggerated,' replied Butler; 'every hog in his sty would agree with you.'

'Well, was not Epicurus a chief potentate? I admire Zeno and the white-robed stoics; but

my soul cleaveth to Epicurus. The hog in his sty is a knowing fellow. Seems to me the hog has the best of it.'

'He never wants "coriander seed." He has no divinity lectures to attend. No iron-hearted sire tyrannizes over him. He has nothing to do but sleep and eat,' cried O'Neill. 'Give him a dry bed of straw: watch him champ it up, until, with grunts of enjoyment, he roots himself beneath the covering, and putting out his snout, is happier than a king. Jolly dog that hog!'

'This is a horrible, blasphemous doctrine,' Butler cried, as he walked rapidly up and down the room, glancing indignantly from the one to the other of his companions. 'Shame, shame on you both.'

'My new faith, if I have any, I have learned from divinity students and clergymen,' L'Estrange said, maliciously.

'I can quite believe it. If I am to take O'Neill as a specimen, divinity students are a godless, faithless, worthless lot,' rejoined Butler.

‘I don’t suppose I am any worse than my neighbours,’ O’Neill said, apologetically. ‘In some respects I am rather better than most of them. I am at least no hypocrite. I pretend to nothing; they do.’

‘And am I worse than *my* neighbours?’ L’Estrange inquired, with greater energy than he had yet displayed. ‘Butler has been slashing me all the morning as an idle, worthless dog. I suppose he is right. I do not justify myself. What I want to know is, am I any worse than others?’

‘Worse! you should be a great deal better,’ Butler replied.

‘Perhaps I should. That is not the question. All I say is, I am not alone. I have plenty to keep me company.’

‘That is a miserable consolation. I wish you joy of it.’

‘However, ’tis a consolation, although a poor one. Stand at the College gates from two o’clock ’till six, and watch the crowd of idle men that go streaming by. I have been in all

the capitals of Europe, and in no other city have I ever seen so many thousands of idle young men as you find in this city of Dublin. Why don't you preach to them? What are they doing? What aim have they in life? What do they propose to do? If I am idle, I only run with the crowd. I swim with the stream. I can plead plenty of examples.'

'And what *are* all these thousands you speak of doing? What are their aims? What ambitions do they pursue?' Butler asked.

'Doing? I will tell you. They are doing nothing, or worse than nothing. They are writing for commissions in the army; expecting government appointments; loafing about billiard-rooms and taverns; cooling their heels in waiting-rooms at the Castle. That's what they are doing. Their ambition soars no higher than shirt collars and kid gloves. Aims! they have none, unless it be the display of polka steps, or to rival in faultless trousers and speckless boots the dandy parson Grisdall. Great huge hulking fellows, ashamed to follow the

trades of their fathers before them, and who must be gentlemen, forsooth, to go to the Castle. If they would only turn their hands to ditching, or breaking stones, or reclaiming bogs, or useful work of any kind, instead of aping this empty, accursed gentility, they would transform the face of this island in a generation.'

'Why, L'Estrange, you are coming out in quite a new character,' exclaimed O'Neill, in surprise.

'If,' went on the former speaker, 'I am idle, my idleness is respectable compared with their industry. I could not stoop to their pursuits. If I do nothing, I retain at least a little self-respect. I escape voluntary self-degradation. Then the objects for which they strive—faugh! That poor little beggar, Wheeler, who lived under me, has been toiling for years. Why? He confessed to me the other day that he should feel happy when he could write Reverend before his name. Think of that as an object of ambition! Poor little wretch, I hope it will do him good.'

‘I do not see how all this improves your position in the least,’ said Butler.

‘I think it does. It was the general tone and example of the society into which I was thrown that made me go wrong in the first instance, and I have never since got right. When I came up to College first I meant well, but evil influences soon led me astray. Then when I became intimate with the fellows of my set, the process of disenchantment, I spoke of awhile ago, began, while their narrow views, the meanness of their motives, and the paltry nature of their ambition disgusted me, and I became an admirer of *laissez faire*.’

‘And you have continued so until this day,’ cried O’Neill.

‘What else was I to do? In mixing with these men and talking with them, a feeling of suffocation used to come over me. I felt as if I was being strangled. Have either of you ever been in a Turkish bath? No! well, the first time I was in Constantinople in ’52, of course I had a bath. When I went into the

hot chamber, heated up to 165 degrees, a queer sensation came over me; great waves of air seemed to flow and throb before my eyes. I thought I should faint. The same kind of feeling came over me amongst my College acquaintances. I felt a species of moral suffocation. I longed to get away from them all and breathe the open, fresh air.

‘But although I could not escape from their society, I thoroughly despised their actions and opinions. I could not walk in their footsteps. I was not going to be a flunky. I had no occasion. If there had been a jolly good fight in ’48, I might have done some good, but after that ridiculous *fiasco*, I shut up and never thought of anything seriously since. People may sneer at nationality as they please, but I’ll tell you ’tis a misfortune to a man if he has no country. If I were an Englishman, or a Frenchman, or an American, there would be some hope of me; as it is—heigho! Let us liquor,’ and he finished a tankard of beer.

‘Do you know,’ he added, when he had

wiped the foam from his moustache, 'that I intended, at one time, to cut the whole concern here, and go out to Africa as a missionary to the cannibals?'

Butler and O'Neill both laughed.

'Why do you laugh? Fact, on my honour. A few years ago I read a fearful account, written by a man named Freeman, a missionary, of the King of Ashantee, on the Gold Coast in Africa. He was a perfect savage; sacrificed thousands of human victims annually; ate human flesh roast and boiled and raw; had built a regular wall of skulls around his palace; and I just thought, that I would go out and persuade him to give it up: to take a blue pill and a black draught, and live cleanly like a gentleman. I did really. It seemed in my then frame of mind the only thing I could do without self-reproach, and one of the few things that was worth doing. I am half sorry now I did not go.'

'And if you had,' cried O'Neill, 'he would have nobbled you in the first instance, and you

would have been cold boiled missionary on his sideboard long since !’

‘ Even so ; it would have been quite as respectable a fate as if I had been killed in India earning six-and-eightpence a day cutting throats in that peninsula ; or, say, in forcing the opium down the throats of the obstinate Chinese. If I had liked I might have been employed in civilizing and Christianizing the Celestials with poison and grape shot. An uncle of mine, colonel of the Eighty-eighth, now in Bombay, offered me a commission in his regiment. He was in a fearful rage when I refused. But I did refuse. While my good friend the Lord Chancellor gives me my quarterly allowance regularly, I don’t see why I should not live and enjoy myself. I see no glory in fighting with barbarians.’

‘ L’Estrange,’ cried O’Neill, ‘ I cannot make you out. You talk in this way about cutting throats in India ; and yet you are hand-in-glove with all the fellows at the Castle whose profession it is. I do not think there is a

military man in Dublin that you do not know.'

'You cannot make me out; can you not? That is very likely, for I cannot make out myself. Know the Castle men, do I? Well, what of that? A man must know some one. I am not a hermit. If I prefer the society of military men, I hope it's no crime. They have the charm of novelty; they are preferable any day to the "natives." As for the Dublin men, I am sick of them.'

'I find,' said Butler, 'you are not an admirer of the Dubliners.'

'An admirer! I should think not. They are the greatest flunkies on the face of the earth. In fact, Dublin is the capital of flunkydomy, and the capital of nothing else that I know of. She has attained a bad pre-eminence in that respect. The place reeks morally and physically. It is a sink of bigotry, rottenness, and corruption. There are men living in the squares who dine on bread-and-butter six days in the week in order to

have a spurt of a party on the seventh: all empty show, and nothing behind it.

‘Don’t take my word for it; look at the facts. Would any other people tolerate for a moment such a miserable sham as the Viceregal Court, with all its tinsel frippery? Would any other people but Dubliners fall down and worship such a poor, painted, bedaubed, bedizened idol as they kneel to in St. Patrick’s Hall? No wonder that the English satirist taunted us with our mean subserviency.

“‘It is bad enough,” he said, “to have a Court Circular at all, giving long columns of description of the baptism of a little baby; but, good Heavens! just think of a sham Court Circular!”

‘Ay, think of it, indeed. Thackeray was right. The people of Dublin not only think of it, but tolerate it—nay, they like it. They shriek and howl at the idea of losing their poor Mumbo Jumbo. They go to pay their Court to their mock king in hired Court suits. Fact! If you doubt it, come with me, and I will show you the announcements in tailors’ windows in

Northumberland and Nassau Streets: "Court suits for hire." What do you think of that?

'Look at the signboards over the shops, from furriers and goldsmiths, with the Royal Arms, down to "Washerwoman to His Excellency." Mullony tells me there is a signboard in the Coombe with this inscription: "Drewson, Flea Catcher to the Lord-Lieutenant." No, sir; I hate Dublin and the Dubliners. Every town and village in the country has some deed of courage or heroism to boast of; but what has Dublin to boast of? The Dubliners have done three things, and three only: they mobbed Dean Swift, flung Henry Grattan in the mire, and stoned William Smith O'Brien. But let us change the subject: I lose my temper when I think of these things.'

During the delivery of L'Estrange's philippic against Dublin and its citizens, Butler was silent. He continued walking up and down the room thinking over what he had just heard. He fancied that he had found the clue to L'Estrange's real character, and apparent

cynicism, in some disappointment of love or ambition in his past life, while much of his experience and many of his sentiments were similar to his own. He was disturbed in this train of thought by L'Estrange asking, abruptly, 'I say, Butler, what do you intend to be? O'Neill, I know, will be a pillar in the Church, but what do you mean to do with yourself?'

The question thus suddenly put was a surprise to Butler. He answered, with hesitation, 'The question puzzles me, L'Estrange; I can scarcely tell you.'

'You have not made up your mind, then, to take orders?'

Butler shook his head.

'The Army, or Navy, perhaps?'

'God forbid.'

'Then you intend to read for fellowship?'

'The very last thing I should ever think of.'

'What then—authorship, civil engineering, or the Indian Civil Service?'

'None of these—especially not the two last.'

'It appears you are almost as much at sea as

myself; surely you do not mean that you are going to the Bar?’

‘That was my original intention, and the wish of my friends; but now I am beginning to doubt whether I am fit to be a lawyer.’

‘No, no! not a lawyer; anything but that. Better be an idler, like me, any day, than a barrister, at the mercy and bidding of every scoundrel who has a five-pound-note to bribe you with to become his mouthpiece, and so defeat the ends of justice. Any lot for an honest man before that.’

‘L’Estrange, you forget that a man must live,’ said O’Neill. ‘We are not all wards in Chancery.’

‘I do not forget. There are a hundred ways of getting bread besides putting on a horsehair wig and selling yourself generally to the devil. Butler, remember what a famous lawyer of the last century said of the Law: “A lawyer sells the work, not of his hands, but of his mind: he degrades himself the most who sells his noblest part.” That’s Gospel truth. The

profession of the law is, of all others, the most despicable, and, for an honest man, the last.'

'Apart altogether from the moral aspects of the question,' rejoined Butler, — 'on which L'Estrange justly lays so much stress—I doubt whether I have the intellectual qualifications necessary to success at the Bar——'

'That's all nonsense,' interrupted O'Neill; 'everyone says you would be irresistible with a jury. I expect to see you a judge before I die.'

'I might be able to address a jury in a case that interested me, I admit; but that is all I ever could do. I never would have patience to search out precedents and cases—to read the books and make myself up in the technicalities of the profession. That to me would be nothing short of slavery. Even if I could, I would not.'

'Right!' cried L'Estrange, with enthusiasm. 'Never do; you were not intended to be a pettyfogging pleader; you are fit for something far higher and better, or I am much mistaken. There is something greater for you

to do than sitting on a bench sentencing criminals and splitting hairs. Such must not be your lot.'

'Pon my word, L'Estrange,' exclaimed O'Neill, 'you do surprise me. If anyone had told me that you could be so much in earnest about any earthly thing, I would not have believed it.'

'Because I wish to save a man of brains from a fate that is worse than death,' L'Estrange replied. 'I know these lawyers, sir, by the dozen, inside out, and outside in. There is not a man amongst them that I can respect. What have all the lawyers that ever lived done for the world or mankind? The greatest misfortune that ever happened to Ireland was that nearly all her men of genius—men who could have explored her antiquities, written her history, given her a literature "racy of the soil," and placed her foremost amongst the nations—wasted that genius in the study of law. When I think of the men of genius this island possessed at the close of the last century,

and the little result produced by their labours, I am saddened and humiliated by the reflexion. Ireland never had such men before; she certainly has not now, and never may have such men again. Yet, what have they accomplished? A man of talent can always make his mark in science, literature, philosophy, or on the grander field of politics, without burying himself in Chancery pleadings, or the still more petty and contemptible pleadings in the *Nisi Prius* Courts.'

'Bravo, bravo, L'Estrange!' cried O'Neill, with delight. 'I own myself vanquished.'

Butler looked upon L'Estrange with kindling eye. He had been completely carried away by his last outburst. 'I was right,' he thought, 'there is stuff in this man of which his companions little dream.'

'O'Neill just now said,' L'Estrange went on addressing Butler, 'that he hoped to see you a judge before he died. That is a wish I cannot form. Is it even an object worthy of ambition? A judge has been recently elevated to the

bench, whom no honest man in this city would allow inside his house.'

'Name, name !' cried O'Neill.

'No, I will not name. You know the man I mean. A lawyer without knowledge of law, an unprincipled politician, a scheming adventurer, a lying charlatan, a smooth-faced hypocrite, a common perjurer, who because he had impudence and brass, and did the dirty work of his party, has been raised to the seat of justice over the heads of men whose shoes he was not fit to clean. Tell me, O'Neill, would you like your friend Butler to be seated by such a man as that? For a friend of mine I can conceive no degradation so deep. Butler is worthy of a better fate.'

'Go on, go on, L'Estrange, the Court is with you,' said O'Neill.

'I have done,' replied L'Estrange, 'I have only to add that if the choice were placed before me of becoming a lawyer with the ermine as the reward of my career, and a crossing to sweep, although I know I have not much of

the martyr element in me, yet I should not hesitate a moment ; I should mount the broom. I can understand a man influenced by proper motives entering the Church. To be a surgeon, or physician, and be able by your skill to lessen human misery and alleviate pain is a noble vocation. The soldier who fights in defence of liberty and country is a hero. Even the occupation of a merchant, although his end is selfish gain, is useful and may be honourable, but that any human being with two hands and capable of earning an honest livelihood should, of his own free choice, become a lawyer, is to me the strongest proof of the entire depravity of human nature.'

CHAPTER X.

JACK HIGGINS THE RITUALIST.

THERE was a lull in the conversation for some minutes. At length L'Estrange broke the silence, saying :

‘It seems to me the best thing a fellow can do, is to open a show.’

‘What kind of show?’ inquired Butler.

‘Clerical show, of course. A show of ecclesiastical millinery and furniture. Get a good church and stock it well; or, as the theatrical people say, “find the properties.” It’s all the fashion in London now. Sure to take.’

‘Turn Puseyite? Isn’t that what you mean?’ asked O’Neill.

‘Exactly. Puseyism is the rage. What’s more, it pays—pays well, sir. What a chance for you, O’Neill. Ever since I knew O’Neill,’ said L'Estrange, addressing himself to Butler,

‘he has been labouring under the universal want—want of “coriander seed;” afflicted with chronic impecuniosity. Standard-bearer of the Red Hand of Tyr-owen! descendant of the mighty Shane! is not that true?’

‘Unfortunately,’ O’Neill answered. ‘The Judicious Commentators are agreed on that point.’

‘Very well. Turn Puseyite, and you will want money no more. I was in London a few weeks ago, and walking down the Bayswater Road, who should I meet but Jack Higgins. I suppose Butler doesn’t know Jack, but you do, O’Neill. He left College shortly after you two entered. I knew him years before, and a seedier poor beggar there wasn’t within the walls of this learned University than Jack Higgins. He was plucked oftener than myself; that made me feel for him. Many a half-crown I’ve lent him, which he never repaid. Well, sir, who should I see coming towards me as I was walking along but friend Jack, rigged out in full high-church costume.

White cross worked on the back of his kid gloves, regulation white choker, waistcoat buttoned behind, stand-up collar, clerical hat with turned-up brim, and all the rest of it. He had a prayer-book in his hand, with a huge gilt cross on the back of it, and he looking as solemn as a funeral. "Halloa, Higgins," I said, "what the deuce brings you here?"

"Oh, Mr. L'Estrange," he simpered, "I am very—ah—glad to see you. But—ah—my name is not Higgins now. I have changed it."

"Changed your name, Jack," I cried. "And what do you call yourself now?"

"Ah—yes—I—ah—have obtained royal permission to assume the name of my mother's family. I like it better because it's more—ah—ah—genteel. Here is my card."

"His mother's name was Murphy. I took the card and looked at it, and then at him. I think I have it in my pocket-book. Yes, here it is. Jack's new name in full—"Reverend

Wilfred Augustus J. De Courcy, 9, Tyburnia Crescent, Bayswater." Jack Higgins, as I live by bread, with a new hat, a new coat, a new religion, a new name, a new man altogether. 'Gad, I was so surprised, you might have knocked me down with a straw. I soon recovered, however. "Jack," I said, chaffing him, "you don't happen to have half-a-crown about you to lend a body, have you'?"

"Ah, Mr. L'Estrange," he sighed, "you are facetious as ever. I wish I could induce you to join us and become religious. Yonder," Jack added meekly, pointing to a spire in the distance, "is the church of which I am the unworthy incumbent. Lady Balderdash built it, and presented me with the living a year ago. Come, see our service next Sunday, do Mr. L'Estrange. The singing is beautiful. I am now on my way to hear confession; I cannot stay any longer. This is Saint" (something's, I forget what) "day. Call at my house and see me." And Master Jack sidled off, bowing

and grinning, leaving me transfixed to the pavement.

‘I called at Tyburnia Crescent next day, and found Jack Higgins, *alias* De Courcy, in clover. I forgot myself and asked for Higgins. “No person of that name lived there,” the stylish man-servant told me. I recollected the new name, and found Mr. De Courcy at home—snug home too. Jack’s smart single brougham was at the door, and Jack himself was in his study. Mediæval handles to the doors, mediæval furniture in the rooms, mediæval fender, fire-irons, and coal bucket; a mediæval ring on Jack’s finger. He dates his letters on the feast of Saint this, and the anniversary of Saint that, and seals them with a mediæval seal. Everything in the house was mediæval but the biscuits and the sherry, and they were capital; and as for Jack himself, he had been metamorphosed.

‘I was so amused with Jack’s serious airs, and sanctified looks, and affected graces, that I determined to go to the exhibition that had

brought him such prosperity, and I went the next Sunday to his church to see the show. It's a fine church, too, in the most fashionable part of Tyburnia. The place was crowded with women—don't think there were ten men present. Lady Balderdash's carriage was outside, with two footmen in flaming liveries behind. Jack was the chief performer, assisted by two curates, and all three were radiant in purple and blue and white silks; arrayed in all the glories of chasuble, cope, and stole. On one side of what Jack calls the altar, was a female figure in wax, as fine as paint and tinsel, and spangles and gewgaws, and bits of lace, could make her, dressed up just like the figures of the Virgin you see at the street corners in Naples, the poorest and tawdriest thing I ever looked at. Madame Tussaud would have scoffed at it.

'Then the service began. The singing was good, and seemed a great attraction. But what astounded me in a Protestant church was the look of the thing. There were lighted candles

burning on the altar, sprinklings of holy water, waving censers, clouds of incense, ringing of bells, elevation of the sacrament, with such bowings and scrapings, and genuflexions, and turning to the right and to the left, to the east and to the west, as fairly puzzled me ; so, not knowing what to do, I stood stock-still, to the evident disgust of a very pretty girl near me, who was an adept in the whole performance. It was as good as a pantomime, and only required the clown to make it perfect.

‘It may have been very fine to those present, but to me, who had witnessed the solemnities at St. Peter’s during Easter week, and heard the *Dies Iræ* sung in the Sistine Chapel, Jack Higgins’s was the poorest and most contemptible parody of a great original I ever saw. I don’t pretend to know much about religion, but I do know that Jack’s lofty tumbling is not religion. And as I watched Jack’s antics that day in modern London, in the middle of the nineteenth century, with all our boasted light, education, and improvement, and thought

of what he and his imitators and followers—for he has both—were bringing us to, I could not help saying, If Jack be right, the Reformation was wrong.

‘If Jack be the right sort of Christian, then Huss was a fanatic, Luther an ass, Calvin an idiot, John Knox a fool; when old Ridley’s dying gaze grew dim, and Latimer wasted in the flames, and Cranmer burnt off his offending hand in the fire, they were fools for their pains. The blood of the martyrs was shed in vain; the fires of Smithfield need not have consumed their victims; and altogether, “ ’tis a mad world, my masters.” Moral—If any young man who cannot preach, nor pray, nor write, nor work, and is not troubled with brains, wants to live in a good house, have a crowd of foolish, fashionable women at his feet, be the cynosure of every eye, and have pretty English girls confessing their sins and frailties to him in secret, let him turn posture master, open a clerical show, and imitate the noble example of Jack Higgins.’

‘We have some of it in College, too,’ said O’Neill. ‘Puseyism will soon take root amongst us, you may depend upon it.’

‘No,’ said Butler; ‘Puseyism will never thrive in Ireland. Has no chance here.’

‘Why not?’ O’Neill asked.

‘Because the genuine article is too plentiful. We have the sterling coin in such abundance, there is no room for counterfeits. With a Roman Catholic Church in almost every street in Dublin, you have no occasion to write up over their doors, “Beware of spurious imitations!”’

‘True; you have hit the nail directly on the head,’ L’Estrange added.

‘I cannot understand the reason of this ritualistic infatuation,’ remarked O’Neill.

‘It’s all the women’s fault,’ answered L’Estrange. ‘Only for them, there would be no clerical shows. Angelina’s heart lies in silks, and ribbons, and laces, and fine colours, and she wants to see Edwin dressed out in similar toggery. He looks so nice, you know,

in all his rainbow hues. It's all millinery from beginning to end.'

'Oh! you blame the women for it? Is not that ungallant?' asked O'Neill.

'Ungallant or not, it's true,' L'Estrange replied. 'I always thought women liked what was manly in men, but, by Jove! I now see they like what is womanly in 'em. They are to blame for this, as well as every other foolish fashion, and like the other absurd fashions, it will run its course.'

'It is a monstrous folly,' Butler rejoined; 'I cannot believe it will continue. The intelligent manhood of England will, ere long, spue Puseysm out of its mouth.'

'Monstrous, indeed,' answered L'Estrange; 'I can respect the Roman Catholic system. It is a wonderful scheme, marvellously adapted to human nature. It can boast of age, authority, association, prestige. Great men have believed in it. Men of genius have been in its priesthood. The assumptions of its clergy, awful as they are, are logical and

consistent. But of this bastard popery called Puseyism what can one say? What claim has it on the belief, or reverence, or homage of mankind? Who can yield to its assumption of sacerdotal power? Who can respect this sham calling itself "Anglo-Catholicism?" Who can do anything but laugh at this lacquered, electro-plated, gilt-gingerbread popery? Begotten of the lust of priestly power, brought forth by vanity and conceit, and nursed by a puling, sickly sentimentalism, the miserable bantling can only hope for an early and ignominious death.

'I like a man who is either a Protestant or a Roman Catholic. I despise the mongrel Puseyite who is neither. Besides, if I want anything I must have it real. If I wanted to abandon my proud prerogative, to give up my right of private judgment and put my soul into the hands of a priest, I would go to a genuine Roman Catholic Priest, not to his sham Puseyite imitator. I would go to a man who tells me, "L'Estrange, I have the keys of

heaven and hell; if you are a good boy I'll let you up to glory, if not I'll send you down below." I wouldn't go to a Puseyite priest who doesn't know whether he has the keys or not, and who is not sure that he is a priest at all.

'If I wanted rags, and wires, and bones, and rusty nails, and relics, and rotten sticks, and shrines, and crucifixes, and holy coats, then I'd go to the old popish rag and bone shop, where the rags are old and genuine. I wouldn't go to the Puseyite rag-shop, where the very rags are new.'

CHAPTER XI.

SIR BERNARD CAREW IN THE TOILS.

LATE one evening in the end of April Miss O'Neill entered Miss Dillon's room in breathless haste. Her pale face and scared looks quite startled her governess, for she hurriedly inquired :

'Helen, my dear, what is the matter with you? Has anything happened?'

'Yes,' Helen exclaimed, sinking into a chair, and gasping for breath. 'I am so frightened! I have had such an adventure! I have just heard such a tale of crime and mystery!'

'What, what is it all about? You frighten me, Helen,' Miss Dillon said, in a tone of alarm. 'Try and calm yourself, and tell me what it is.'

'It is all about Sir Bernard Carew and Captain Flood,' replied Helen, her agitation

gradually subsiding. Give me a little time to recover and recollect myself, and I will tell you everything. Oh, what dreadful, dreadful men they have been!' she added.

Miss Dillon's face became white as Helen's own when she heard the names pronounced. She felt frightened, she knew not why, as she re-echoed Helen's words:

'Sir Bernard Carew and Captain Flood! Why, what have you heard of them? Has Captain Flood been found?'

'You must have a little patience with me while I try to collect my thoughts. I am so horrified at what I have just listened to, that I scarcely know what to say first, or where to begin,' Helen replied.

'Certainly, my dear. Take your time. Try and compose yourself, I can wait,' Miss Dillon said. And she poured out some Eau de Cologne on Helen's handkerchief, and handed it to her.

'Before I say another word,' said Helen, sinking her voice to a whisper, as she

locked the door, 'you must solemnly promise me that you will never breathe a word to mortal of what I am going to tell you. . Will you promise?'

'What can the mystery be?' Miss Dillon inquired. 'Well! I suppose I must promise.'

'Very well! Now draw over your chair and sit down, while I relate to you the whole of the long and dreadful story. You will be as much shocked by it as I have been myself.'

'I am all attention, my dear,' Miss Dillon rejoined.

'After dinner this evening I went out for a walk on the terrace by the river side. I had a severe headache all day, and I thought that the cool evening breeze would do it good. It was fine when I left the Castle, and I quite enjoyed the walk, but I had not been out very long before it began to rain. Not caring to come in, as you were all away, I took shelter in the little summer-house next to the boat-shed, and as I had a book with me, sat down and began to read.

‘I had not been there very long, when I heard the sound of voices on the river close by, and looking out, I saw two men in a small boat pulling into the shore. They rowed the boat under the shed—no doubt for shelter from the rain—which was now falling heavily. The door of the summer-house was open, and, as I sat behind it at the window overlooking the river, a person looking in from the boat-shed would have thought it was empty. As the prow of the boat pointed to the door, I could not see the faces of the two men; but occasionally the man next the stern turned round to speak to his companion, and then I got a glimpse of his side face.

‘I took no particular notice of them, but went on with my book, until my ear caught the names of Flood and Carew, and then I listened. The men spoke to each other in low tones, but I overheard every syllable they uttered. “So you think, Morton,” said the man in the prow of the boat, who was next to me, and whose name I soon learned

was Stinson; "so you think there is no chance of finding out what has become of Flood? Can you hear nothing of him?" "I fear not," said the man named Morton, partly turning round, so that I saw his profile; "I have been here now more than a month, and I can get neither tale nor tidings of him. Carew has managed it cleverly, however he has done it." "Have you made a complete and exhaustive search?" the man Stinson asked. "I think so," Morton replied. "I have been over every part of Hare Court, and the grounds adjoining it. I have been in every room in the house, and measured most of them. I have carefully explored all the offices and farm buildings. I have searched the woods and the young plantations. I have examined every hole and corner; and left no stone unturned. There is not a farmhouse, or cabin within miles of the place, that I have not been in; not a servant, peasant, or farmer in the country that I have not made inquiries of. The answers are all in this note-book,"

he added, tapping the breast of his coat with his left hand, "and the answers amount to—nothing. Up to yesterday morning, I was unable to glean the slightest information, and yet I was as sure that Carew had concealed Flood's dead body somewhere near Hare Court as I was of my own existence."

"You still hold to the opinion, then, that Carew murdered him?" Stinson asked. "I am as certain of it as if I saw him commit the act," Morton answered. "Who else had any interest in putting Flood out of the way? Carew was in his power, and found it convenient to get rid of him. It is certain he has got rid of him. The only points I am doubtful about are, how to get the proof, and where to find the body?" "And what information did you get yesterday morning?" Stinson inquired. "Not much, yet enough to enable me to form an opinion," Morton replied; "though not to prove anything. About half-a-mile from Hare Court there is a large limekiln. When I arrived here in search of Flood, this limekiln

was one of the first places I examined ; but it was then cold and empty. Yesterday morning I was looking at the burners drawing a charge from the kiln, and it struck me then, for the first time, that I had forgotten to inquire how long it had been idle ; and I asked one of the men. I learned from him that it had been on fire six or seven weeks ago—mark you, both before and after Flood's disappearance. I asked him, if a person fell into the burning kiln what would be the result ? Would his remains be found, and if so, could they be distinguished ? 'Oh, faith !' said he, 'if you fell in, and it afire, there would be an end of you ; no one would ever hear of you again, or know that you had fallen in, unless they saw you : clothes, flesh, and all would be consumed ; even your very bones would be turned into lime. The only thing likely to be found after you, would be any money that you might happen to have about you.' I followed up the hint, and inquired if he had ever found anything in drawing the kiln ? 'I have not,' he said, 'but

Murtagh Sullivan has. Murtagh,' he cried, throwing down the shovel, 'where are you?' The man Sullivan soon made his appearance, and, on being questioned, admitted that he had found some silver and copper coins, a corkscrew, and a buckle, at the eye of the kiln, five or six weeks ago. 'Did you find these things before or after Captain Flood disappeared from Hare Court?' I asked. 'Well,' he said, 'I think it was about three or four days after; and who can tell,' said he, 'but that the captain may have fallen in and was burned?' 'Very likely,' said I, as I walked away; but, I thought to myself, it is still more likely that he was lured here, and then flung in by Sir Bernard Carew."

Helen was here interrupted in her narrative by an exclamation of horror from the terrified Miss Dillon.

'I was so frightened, my dear,' Helen continued, 'that I shook like an aspen leaf. I must have made some noise, too, for Morton cried out, "What's that? Take care," he said

to the other, "that there is no one in that summer-house." "No, the door's open; you can see it's empty," Stinson answered. "You have only heard the noise of the rain falling on the leaves."

'I nearly fainted; and my first thought was, to rush out and run home; but my limbs failed me; I could not move. The two men, however, soon resumed their conversation. "If you be correct in your opinion," Stinson said, "you can never prove anything against Carew. The body of Flood must be produced and identified first; and that's impossible, if he has been consumed in the limekiln." "That's as it may be," Morton answered. "No one can tell what may turn up. Something may be discovered. But, even if no evidence be forthcoming, I can play the other game; and I'll take care that it shall be a losing game for Carew, and a winning game for me. I have found my prey, and I'll stick to him like a leech. I'll never let go my hold while he has a shilling in his pocket."

“But are you sure you can put the screw on him?” inquired Stinson. “I thought,” he added, “Flood was the only man that knew all Carew’s secrets. He had him under his thumb, I know, and could make him do as he pleased.”

“And I am Flood’s successor,” Morton boasted. “I stand in Flood’s shoes, and am acquainted with all Carew’s secrets too. The captain kept them closely to himself, and made a good thing out of them. Now it’s my turn. Two months ago, I knew little or nothing of them. But now my information is full and complete, and I am going to use it.”

“How did you become acquainted with these facts?” inquired Stinson.

“Ah, that’s a long story,” answered Morton, “I will tell it all to you some day. But I may say in a few words, that there is a woman involved. For a long time Flood had been suspicious of foul play, on the part of Carew. For, some years ago, he deposited a sealed packet with a friend, with directions, that

if he were not heard from at certain appointed times, or if he should disappear, or die suddenly, it should be forwarded to the woman in question. His directions were followed, and the sealed packet reached its destination. On being opened, it was found to contain a memoir of Carew's life—written by Flood—giving an account of all the facts he had learned concerning Sir Bernard, together with various documents respecting him, of the highest importance. From this memoir I obtained all my information. I found a long description of yourself in it, and I knew you the moment I saw you at the tavern. It was a most fortunate meeting for us both. You see now that we may be useful to each other.”

“Are the documents and facts you speak about, of an important—a criminal nature?” inquired Stinson.

“Why, yes,” Morton replied, “when young gentlemen take to signing other men's names, and when the bills have not been presented or paid, but are held in safe custody, it becomes

a very serious thing for them, and a little criminal also. And that's what Sir Bernard has been doing—with other freaks, of a similar kind, too numerous to mention. The forged bills are in safe keeping—ready to be produced at a moment's notice. No doubt he would like to buy them up at a handsome premium, but the holders won't sell them at any price. With their aid, I think we shall not have much difficulty in bringing Sir Bernard to his senses;" and the man gave an exulting laugh.

"I see," Stinson remarked. "Now I understand the secret of Flood's influence with him."

"Of course," the other said. "Flood held the forged bills over him as a whip to make him do his bidding. But there's more to come. Do you see that big house yonder amongst the trees? That's Ballyluce Castle, the residence of Sir Arthur O'Neill. He has a niece living with him, who is an heiress—they say she is immensely wealthy; and the girl is good-

looking too. What do you think? Carew has cast his eye on her, and is going to marry her. He is there every other day, and the thing may be looked on as settled. I have all this from his own servants, and I think it may be relied on. Now, Stinson, what have *you* to say to that little game?"

"That I'll spoil it," exclaimed Mr. Stinson, with an oath. "The scoundrel!"

"I don't think I would spoil it if I were you," said Morton, persuasively, "let him go on. The deeper he involves himself, the greater will be our hold over him. Give him plenty of rope. You and I are not very squeamish. Sir Bernard Carew, as a rich bachelor, is splendid game for us, but Sir Bernard Carew married to a rich heiress, will be a regular gold mine for us all. Let him marry the girl: all the better for our purposes, say I."

"Well," said Stinson, "perhaps you are right. It certainly will give us a greater hold on him. I must think over it."

"True," said Morton, "I am glad you see it

in that light. And now, Stinson, that I have told you candidly my position towards Carew, I hope you will reciprocate my confidence, and tell me how you stand with regard to him. We should thoroughly understand each other, in order that we may work with effect. Is your matter all legal and above board? Will it bear inspection?"

"What, the marriage? Certainly. Everything was legally done. In other matters I may have been a fool, but I had my senses about me in that. I have the certificate attested in due form; the priest, to be sure, is dead, but one of the witnesses is still living," Stinson replied.

"So much the better," Morton rejoined. "I was afraid there might have been something: some little informality; a difference in religion; a previous marriage; or something that might invalidate the contract: I am glad to hear from you that everything is correct. In dealing with so old a bird as Carew we can be neither too cautious, nor too

sure of our ground. He is a formidable opponent."

"So far as I am concerned make your mind perfectly easy," answered Stinson firmly; "we have nothing to fear. Carew was a professed Catholic when the marriage took place, although he calls himself a Protestant now. Flood, on his behalf, induced us years ago to emigrate to the United States. He agreed to pay us an annual allowance on the condition that we did not annoy him, and that Catherine did not use his name. It was a miserable pittance to be sure, but we thought he was poor, and were contented with it. We went to Iowa, and a hard time we had of it in the far West. I never knew that Carew had succeeded to the property and the title until about four months ago, and then learned it by mere accident. He never informed us, nor did he increase the allowance for the support of his wife and child. Going into a store in the village one day I took up a newspaper: it happened to be a copy of the 'Limerick Chronicle,' and the first thing that

caught my eye was the name of Sir Bernard Carew, Bart. Oh, my fine gentleman, I thought, is that it? And I made up my mind then and there to come home and see my son-in-law. I did not acquaint my daughter with my intention, and now, here I am, determined either to make Carew come down handsomely, or acknowledge his lawful wife."

"If he should deny the marriage, what will you do?" Morton asked.

"But he can't deny it," replied Stinson warmly.

"He can deny anything;" answered Morton, "and if he goes into a court of law his purse is longer than yours. My advice to you is, make no claim upon him at present, but wait and watch the course of events. I am not sure that the marriage would hold good in law. It is doubtful. At best a trial would be tedious and expensive. Some things too, in your own life would not bear looking into. Better, I say, allow him to marry this girl O'Neill. You can thus always wring a hand-

some annuity from him under the threat of exposure. He will be willing to pay for her sake, if not for his own. In the meantime, the first thing we have to do is to find out, if possible, something positive about Flood. If we can get any real evidence against Carew, he will be entirely in our hands. If you help me, I'll help you. Is it a bargain ? ”

“ Agreed ! I'll take your advice. Here is my hand on it.” And they shook hands together.

“ There is one thing I have never been able to find out,” said Stinson. “ How did Flood first discover all these things about Carew ? ”

“ Flood himself tells the whole story in the memoir of which I have spoken,” answered Morton, “ and it is, without exception, the most extraordinary story I ever read. It appears that Carew and Flood, up to that time strangers to each other, were crossing the Channel one stormy night together, and as they approached the French coast the gale blew with fearful violence: the sea was making complete breaches over the vessel,

and they were in danger of going down. Carew was in the cabin, and Flood—but the rain is now over, let us be going, I will tell you the remainder as we go down the river.” And they pulled out into the stream.

‘I watched them nervously through the window until a bend in the Shannon hid them from my sight, and then I left the summer-house more dead than alive, and hastened home. And now, dear Miss Dillon, what do you think of Sir Bernard Carew?’ inquired Miss O’Neill.

‘I am so thunderstruck, Helen, I do not know what to think,’ replied Miss Dillon, who had listened to Helen’s startling narrative with a feeling of terror that blanched her face, and made her tremble in every limb. ‘I am so shocked, my dear, I do not know what to think, for if what these men say be true, then Sir Bernard is not only married, but he has been guilty of forgery and murder, and perhaps of other crimes.’

‘Evidently. The difficulty is to know how

far their statements are to be relied upon,' rejoined Helen. 'If their accounts of Sir Bernard be correct, he is a terrible man.'

'But is it possible that they can be true?' Miss Dillon asked, incredulously.

'I cannot say,' answered Helen; 'I have only told you what I heard these men say. I think I have related the conversation, word for word, as it occurred between them. I felt like a criminal myself while listening to them.'

'How alarmed you must have been, my love!' Miss Dillon remarked.

'I never was so frightened before. What should I have done, if the men had discovered me in the summer-house? I tremble now at the thought of it,' Helen said.

'You had, indeed, a most fortunate escape, my child,' Miss Dillon rejoined; 'they might have murdered you, if they had known you had learned their secrets.'

'And they are both wicked, unscrupulous men,' Helen said, and she shuddered as she thought of the danger she had escaped. 'They

did not dream that anyone was listening to them; their conversation was quite free and unreserved, and that is what makes me fear they spoke the truth about Sir Bernard Carew.'

'It is an awful affair for him. The wretched man!' Miss Dillon exclaimed, mournfully. 'To think that a person in his position should have been such a criminal! It is almost incredible. The story of this man Stinson about the marriage may be true. That I could understand. But what motive had Sir Bernard to commit forgery, or to be guilty of the other acts to which this man alluded? And as if forgery were not enough, that he should be guilty of murder! I cannot believe it.'

'It does seem improbable, I admit,' Helen said, 'but this Morton spoke as positively as if there could be no doubt about it: and besides, what has become of Captain Flood? How is it that he has never been heard of?'

'It is a mystery which I cannot fathom,'

Miss Dillon answered. 'Captain Flood's disappearance was a most unaccountable affair, certainly ; but even if Sir Bernard had wished to get rid of him, is it likely that he could have killed him and thrown him into a lime-kiln without being seen by some one, or found out in some way? The very idea is absurd.'

'Be that as it may,' Helen replied, 'it is certain that Morton holds some documents about Sir Bernard which place the latter in his power. The man evidently means to extort money from him on the strength of them. If there were no truth in his story, how could he have known of this memoir written by the captain, or learned the secrets of Sir Bernard's life? I should like to see that memoir myself; unfortunately, I lost the conversation between the two men at the most interesting point; that part of it which related to myself, was anything but pleasant. Can you tell me what gave rise to these reports?'

'Well, my dear, I really cannot say.

Servants will gossip, you know,' Miss Dillon answered. 'And then Sir Bernard has been a frequent visitor at the Castle lately.'

'I know. But I thought his visits were intended for uncle. They have been constantly talking about this new drainage scheme,' remarked Helen.

'I fancy Sir Bernard has found a greater attraction here than either your uncle or the drainage scheme,' said Miss Dillon, looking at Helen affectionately.

'If his visits have any reference to me, the sooner they cease, the better,' Helen rejoined, indignantly.

'Well, my child, you are your own mistress. But what are you going to do in this matter? Shall you tell your uncle and aunt what you heard this evening?'

'No,' replied Helen, 'I think not. It would be unfair to Sir Bernard Carew. We have no positive knowledge as yet. We do not know who these men are, or what they are. Let us act as if I had heard nothing from them.'

I shall be curious to see what Sir Bernard will do ; or how far his audacity will carry him. Our best plan will be to follow the advice of Mr. Morton, to “wait, and watch the course of events.” ’

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOVERNESS AND HER PUPIL.

THE next morning after breakfast, Miss Dillon and her pupil were seated together in Helen's boudoir. They both laid aside their books as if by common agreement, and reverted to the subject of the previous evening.

'I scarcely closed my eyes all night, my dear,' said Miss Dillon, addressing Helen, 'thinking of the fearful story you told me. What an adventure you had!'

'I lay awake myself, too,' Helen answered. 'I was so nervous and excited I could not sleep; and I have been imagining all kinds of things about Sir Bernard Carew.'

'No wonder,' Miss Dillon rejoined, 'I have been thinking of him all night—could not get him out of my head. Twenty times have I gone over in my mind all that you heard these

men say of him, and the more I think of it, the more afraid I am that he is a guilty man. A hundred things about him have crowded back to my remembrance that I had forgotten. Five or six years ago the strangest rumours were afloat concerning him ; they have since died away ; and the regular life he has led since his father's death has helped to make people forget them ; but now, I see the reason of them all.

‘I knew, of course, that he had been wild and reckless, and that he had lost large sums of money in gambling, for he involved your cousin Eugene heavily, but I did not think that he had been criminal until now. And yet, I always thought it strange that his father should have been so embittered against him. Sir Edward must have heard something serious about him, or he would not have acted so sternly, or indeed, as I thought at the time, so unnaturally. He would not allow Sir Bernard to come home ; would not hold any intercourse with him ; and even when on his death-bed,

refused to see his only son. A father, however eccentric he may be, does not cut himself off from his only child in that way without cause. I do not like to think, or speak, uncharitably of anyone, my dear,' Miss Dillon said, in conclusion, 'but I have very grave suspicions of Sir Bernard Carew.'

'I remember too,' said Helen, 'that when Eugene came home from College, he told me some strange stories about him. You know what an easy-going, quiet, good-natured fellow Eugene is; he would not say a harsh word of anyone, yet when he spoke of Sir Bernard, he frowned and ground his teeth with rage. I never knew him to speak so bitterly of any one else. I asked Eugene one day if Sir Bernard had injured him in any way. He shook his head, and merely replied, "I know some things about him that I must not tell you; the man is a rascal, let us speak no more about him." So you see, he had learned something bad about Carew also.'

'Did your cousin tell his father or mother

any of these things about Sir Bernard?' Miss Dillon inquired.

'I think not,' Helen replied. 'It was an unpleasant subject on account of Eugene's debts. You may remember how angry uncle and aunt were with him: aunt, especially, was in such a fearful rage, she would not speak to him for weeks. Poor Eugene made a confidante of me, and told me all his troubles. "I could bear with father's outbursts of temper, Nell," he used to say to me; "he flames up into a passion, and then it's all over; but I cannot stand my mother's looks. The expression on her face is a greater punishment than if she put a dagger into me. She has reason to be angry, I confess, but why does she keep it up so long? I may blame Carew for this; he led me into all sorts of scrapes."'

'What a consummate hypocrite Sir Bernard must be!' exclaimed Miss Dillon. 'To see him last evening smiling and laughing at the dinner-table, no one would have thought he had any secrets—any guilt on his conscience,

or anxiety on his mind. The dinner was a grand affair, and he seemed the most animated and merry of all the gentlemen present. He paid special court to your aunt during the evening—I noticed that. He even deigned to honour poor me with some of his attention, and expressed the sorest disappointment at your absence. He little thought while he was entertaining us, that at the same time you were listening to such revelations about him. I thought last night after you left me, my dear,' Miss Dillon continued, 'what a providential thing it was that your headache prevented you from going with us! It was most fortunate.'

'Why do you think it was providential?' Helen asked, with a curious smile.

'Because, my dear, you could not have been in the summer-house to hear those men, if you had been at the dinner party,' Miss Dillon answered.

'Well! Even if I had not been, what then?' inquired Helen, with the same smile.

‘ Ah Helen, my dear child,’ Miss Dillon said, ‘ you must forgive me for what I am going to say, but when I saw Sir Bernard Carew coming here two or three times a week on one pretext or another ; dropping into luncheon one day ; coming another day to dinner ; received with such evident favour by your uncle, and I may say also, by your aunt ; inviting us all to Hare Court, and getting up such splendid parties for our gratification ; constantly with Sir Arthur and on such intimate terms with him ; I thought I saw through the great Shannon drainage scheme, and I got some foolish fancies into my old head. I began to think that I was going to lose my pupil, and that my Helen would one day be Lady Carew. I said nothing, but I thought a great deal. Of course that is out of the question now.’

‘ You dear old love !’ said Helen, getting up and kissing her, ‘ what made you imagine such nonsense ? Was that the way you were going to dispose of me ?’

‘ Why, my darling ! was it not natural that

I should think so?' Miss Dillon asked. 'I love you very dearly Helen, and if there be one wish dearer than another to my heart, it is to see you happily settled in a happy home. I know you will give me a corner in it, where I may look on and see the happiness of my child,' and the good lady's eyes grew dim with tears.

'Do not speak of it, dear,' said Helen, as she kissed her again; 'I do not think I shall ever marry. You and I shall always live together—nothing shall separate us. I have never seen anyone that I could love yet, least of all Sir Bernard Carew. Even if I had not heard these revelations respecting him, I should never have thought of marrying him—not if he were the only man in the wide world.'

'Why not, dear?' Miss Dillon inquired. 'He has all the qualities that are supposed to be acceptable to our sex.'

'I dislike the man exceedingly,' Helen answered. 'I conceived an instinctive aversion to him from the very first moment I saw

him. You know I cannot control my involuntary likes and dislikes.'

'How strange! And some girls are breaking their hearts for him,' remarked Miss Dillon.

'They may break their hearts for his establishment, but not for himself,' Helen rejoined.

'But you forget that he is young, and rich, and esteemed handsome,' said Miss Dillon.

'He is not handsome in my eyes,' Helen replied. There is a something about him that I cannot describe; and, at times, his eyes have a furtive expression that makes me distrust him instinctively.'

'You are a merciless judge, Helen. I should like to know what human being could stand the ordeal of your criticism. No man could bear it,' Miss Dillon added.

'I do not think I am so hard to be pleased,' Helen pleaded; 'but I do dislike Sir Bernard Carew.'

'I should like to see the man that would

please you, my dear,' cried Miss Dillon. 'He must be a paragon of perfection indeed.'

'So should I,' answered Helen, with a laugh. 'And yet I have had my dreams of him too. I have built castles in the air in which he appeared: I have seen him in my reveries; in my solitary moments his image has risen up before me: and whether in my reveries, or dreams, in my waking or sleeping hours, whether reading or thinking, the image before my mind is still the same—something great, original, noble, and powerful: something that I could not only love, but worship, reverence, idolize: something in which I could lose my own identity as the rain-drop is lost in the river: something that could satisfy the hungry longing of my heart. The mere hope of finding this image fills me with ecstasy: but shall I ever find it? I only know, that compared with my own ideal of love, the descriptions I read of it in poets and novelists, seem to me commonplace and cold:' and she looked out dreamily at the window.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DIVINITY STUDENT.

‘WHAT ails you now?’ said Butler, as O’Neill entered his room, looking ill and low-spirited, ‘why do you look so anxious?’

‘I am beginning to quake,’ O’Neill replied. ‘The examinations will be here in a few weeks, and I have not yet read a word of the books. I have been lushing so perpetually the whole of this term, I have not read a single line. Hallet glares at me at lectures. I shall be plucked.’

‘Serve you right, you deserve no better fate.’

‘If I be plucked, the Iron Hearted will blaspheme. My mother will just look at me, and I shall—I think I’ll emigrate.’

‘Why don’t you begin to work? you have nearly six weeks yet.’

‘I have been just thinking I would. If I devote the whole of my gigantic energies to it, and read day and night, I might stagger through. You are a potentate at divinity, will you help me?’

‘Certainly, I’ll do what I can for you. What books are there?’ Butler inquired.

‘Let us consult. There’s Pearson on the Creed. The “judicious” Pearson. He has a long chapter on “I believe,” and a stunning note on the preposition “in.” There’s Hooker’s Church Polity. The “judicious” Hooker. There’s Magee on The Atonement. The “learned” Magee. He pitches savagely into you Dissenters. There is Oldshausen on the Romans—a most awful book. I shall never get through him.’

‘There is not so much in him to get through,’ retorted Butler. ‘Paul could have done very well without him. Go on.’

‘There’s Paley, the “sensible and acute” Paley. His illustration of the Pigeon is first-rate. I wonder what the other pigeons said,

when they found their heap of corn gone? Then there's the "subtle" Butler. Mosheim, in six huge volumes. Mosheim himself is bad enough, but the notes are perfectly appalling. I wonder if any human being ever did read these notes! Some one must have written them, though. Imagine such a task!

'I know all about Mosheim, go on with your list,' said Butler.

'Where was I? Ay, there's Alford's Greek Testament. I must get another copy. There's a new edition coming out, I see. I hope it's dearer than the last. Then there is some swell on the "Trinity." I forget his name, but it's a huge volume that thick' (and he put the palms of his hands about four inches apart), 'and half-a-dozen others, I cannot think of them now.'

'Is that all?' inquired Butler, carelessly.

'Is that all? And quite enough, too, I should think. I shall never get them done in time. I know I shall not.'

'I see no difficulty in doing it. If you will

only keep sober for about three weeks, you can easily master them all.'

'Do you think so?' replied O'Neill, eagerly. 'Then I'll reform this very day. I'll drink nothing but beer. I don't want to be plucked.'

'Although it's something like assisting at sacrilege, I'll help you. I have been over the whole ground years ago, and know every inch of the way.'

'Thanks! you are a friend indeed. I need not go to a grinder, then?'

'Grinder; no! He would keep you six months at work that we can do in three weeks. The difficulties are more apparent than real. The whole question lies in a nutshell,' Butler replied.

'It appears easy to you, because you are such a swell at everything.'

'If I understand these things, it's owing to no merit of mine. I couldn't well help it. All I know, I got from the best man, the dearest old friend, and the finest scholar, I ever knew. I will tell you all about Dr. Young, smoe day or

other. I wonder what he would say, if he knew I was going to teach a drunken man Theology!' Butler said.

'What could he say? But that it was a dispensation,' O'Neill rejoined.

'How horrified he would be at the idea of a man going into the Church because his father had a living in his gift!'

'But all the other fellows do it,' pleaded O'Neill.

'Very true! But if all the other fellows steal, and drink, and blaspheme, and lie, and forge, is that any justification of stealing, drinking, swearing, lying, and forgery? If I do all these things, is it any reason why you should do them?'

'No; I do not say that. But you should hear the other men talk. They all enter the Church as a profession. Those who have no livings hope to get them.'

'I know they do. I have heard them talk, with a vengeance. They go to the Ministry for bread, exactly as a man would go make shoes.'

‘And what should they enter the Church for? I am all at sea.’

‘I do not know. I was only speaking of my old tutor, Doctor Young. He, poor old man, is behind this enlightened, this scientific age, but he believed that Christianity was true: that it was something supernatural, Divine—a great scheme for the redemption and salvation of the race—and that the Author and founder of the plan still watched its workings, and himself superintended its operations,—that he chose his own agents to carry on his work, and that when he wanted Ministers, he exerted a spiritual influence to “call” them, yes, “call” them to a spiritual work, and that selfishness, pride, interest, and Mammon, deemed by him a devil, did *not* call them to the sacred office. Simple, dear old man! We know better. Don’t we, O’Neill?’

‘Is there such a thing as this “Divine call?” It’s new to me,’ O’Neill answered.

‘Then you have never read your prayer-book. At your ordination you will have to

swear,—mind, it's solemn swearing,—that you have received this Divine call.'

'It begins to look rather a serious business,' said O'Neill.

'Not at all. Habit, custom, example, will accustom men to anything, reconcile them to anything, even to false swearing. I should not like to take that oath; you will.'

'I never looked at it in that serious way before. Never thought of it even.'

'Then you should have thought of it. Why did your Regius Professor of Divinity not teach you something upon the subject? It would have been of as great importance to you as Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History. That's what I complain of. Your professors do not teach you these things. They give you plenty of chaff and very little grain.'

'Then you believe in this Divine call?' O'Neill inquired.

'I did not say I believed in it. I said Doctor Young believed in it. But if there be any truth in Christianity at all, I should say

that was one of the most essential things in it. If there be no Divine call there is no Divine system,' Butler said.

'But of all the men in the Divinity class not one professes to have received this "call." The subject is never mentioned. They never think of it,' O'Neill rejoined.

'I believe you; and that accounts to me for many things that I could not understand for a long time. That is the explanation of a powerless religion: a non-progressing, a dead Church. It is because your ministers and preachers have not been called themselves that they cannot call others. They speak without authority. They have no credentials. When the Divinely-called man speaks, all must listen. His word is with power. What tremendous force a preacher Divinely called exerts! A Savonarola, a Luther, a Knox, a Wesley, a Whitfield, each of these men is in morals what x is in Algebra, the unknown quantity. Such men change the course of history. They turn the world upside down.'

‘Why are they not more numerous then?’ asked O’Neill.

‘Ah, that is the mystery. The Great Teacher came only in the fulness of time, and then remained for three short years. Why did he not come sooner? Why did he not stay longer? Who can answer these questions? I only know that it is now, as it was then, the money-changers are in the Temple, not only in the Temple, but in the Holy of Holies. If He came now as he did to Jerusalem, He might say with even greater truth, “My house has been called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Get out your books and papers, I shall look in upon you after commons this evening.’

O’Neill was awed and subdued by the solemnity of Butler’s language and manner. He had never heard him speak in this way before, for although he had abused him for drinking, and kept aloof from his companions, Butler had hitherto not spoken to him directly on religious questions; he seemed rather to

shrink from their introduction and discussion, so that some of the students looked upon him as a freethinker, if not a downright infidel.

O'Neill was, therefore, all the more impressed by Butler's remarks, because they were entirely unexpected. And they showed unmistakably that such solemn topics were familiar to the speaker's mind. The conversation of the morning had left a profound impression on O'Neill. He determined that he would in all earnestness cut loose from his gay companions, and address himself seriously to what was to be the work of his life. In these resolutions he was quite sincere. It is easier, however, to resolve than act. Nothing is more disheartening to the thinking moralist than to reflect on the uselessness of good resolutions, and the little result of preaching, no matter how faithful and truthful it may be, and so it was in the present instance.

That evening O'Neill and Butler were busily engaged in reading and discussing one of the books named in the foregoing pages, and the

former was congratulating himself on having taken the first step in the right direction, when a confused number of voices and noise of foot-steps were heard outside, and a thundering knock shook the door.

‘Confound these fellows,’ cried O’Neill, ‘they give me no peace,’ and a crowd of the “Jokers” instantly filled the room.

‘Here we are, O’Neill, old boy, come along. We’ll make a regular night of it;’ cried Gleeson, who seemed to act as the spokesman of the party.

‘What! reading at this time of night!’ exclaimed little Kyle. ‘Shut up shop. We are late already. I vote that we go to the “Shades” first.’

‘To the “Shades,” by all means,’ chimed in a dozen voices; “to the Shades, to the charming Shades.”’

‘I don’t think I shall go out to-night,’ said O’Neill, looking irresolutely at Butler. ‘I don’t feel quite well.’

‘Not go out? Why not? You promised

last night you would. Have you already forgotten your engagement with the fair Kitty? Fie! a gentleman should always keep his word,' said one of the party.

'Not go out, indeed!' cried another, 'that is a likely story. Was it not yourself who proposed the whole plan? And you want to back out of it now? No! no!'

'If you are not well,' added Daly, 'that is because you have not had your grog, you never are yourself till after the tenth glass.' And he sung in a clear tenor voice, "We won't go home till morning, 'till daylight doth appear."

'Come, you shall,' chimed in Mullony, 'if we carry you by force. A stretcher, ho!'

'Do you know the reason why he funks? He is afraid of Butler there,' said a man named Bigdale. 'Butler is a monk himself, and he wants to make one of O'Neill. D—all monks and nuns, I say;' and he sung, "For when the D—I was sick," &c.

Butler sat still, and took no notice of any

of the speakers, not even of the last ; but his lip curled, and his nostrils dilated with scorn.

‘I don’t think I shall go out to-night,’ O’Neill answered, in a tone of voice still more undecided than before.

‘Nonsense!’ replied Gleeson. ‘You cannot help yourself. Put on your coat, and come along. We are losing time. I say, Butler, lay aside your books, and join us in a spree for once. Do! there’s a good fellow.’

“For he’s a jolly good fellow,” sung out in chorus a dozen voices, “which nobody can deny.”

‘I shall not go myself,’ said Butler, ‘nor shall O’Neill either, if I can prevent him.’

‘Do you hear that?’ exclaimed three or four of them together. ‘If that is not keeping a man in leading-strings, I don’t know what is.’

‘Confound me! if I would allow anyone to dictate to me in that way,’ said another. ‘I am my own master, at any rate. No one shall rule me.’

‘If you are O’Neill’s friend,’ said Butler, addressing Gleeson, ‘you will not ask him to

leave this room to-night. Look at him and you will see how ill he is. His hand trembles. He has been talking of black cats to-night. *You* know what that means,' and he looked at him significantly.

Gleeson got very red in the face, as he answered, 'Ill! All flam and bamboozle. A few glasses of whisky will set him as right as ninepence,' and he whistled an air.

'Besides, you know, I have the examinations to think of,' O'Neill pleaded.

'Examinations!' they all shrieked. 'Haven't we examinations as well as you? To perdition with the examinations!' they cried with one voice.

'This will test him,' thought Butler, as he sat silently looking into the fire.

O'Neill, however, unable to bear this running fire of banter and chaff, had risen and put on his coat, and was approaching Butler as,—

'Bravo! Bravo!' was shouted in chorus. 'An O'Neill for ever.'

'So you are going, then,' said Butler, looking at him reproachfully.

‘Only for an hour or two. I shall not be away longer,’ O’Neill answered.

‘Very well. I have no more to say. Remember the conversation of this morning.’

‘I do remember it. Don’t despise me altogether,’ said O’Neill, in a low voice.

‘It would be very difficult for me to respect you,’ was the answer.

A very babel of voices prevailed in the room, and as everyone was talking, and no one listening, no one in particular was heard as O’Neill said to Butler,

‘Have you any money of mine left?’

‘I have. About three pounds, I think.’

‘Give me some, will you?’ O’Neill humbly asked.

‘No! Certainly not. If I am to keep your money, I will,’ Butler replied.

‘Do give me some. I do not want to have these fellows paying for me. They talk of it afterwards. Gleeson always does. Though he sponges on me,’ said O’Neill.

‘I cannot help it. I shall not give you any.’

Butler answered, sternly.

‘If you refuse, you will find me sent home to you in the morning in a cab, naked, and wrapped up in the advertisement sheet of *The Times*.

Butler was obdurate. He did not even laugh at this last sally.

‘There’s a good fellow,’ O’Neill entreated, ‘give us ten shillings.’

‘Not a shilling.’

‘Give us five shillings.’

‘I told you I would not.’

‘Make it two-and-six.’

‘Not one farthing.’

‘Then give us a solitary bob.’

The last appeal was too much. Butler could not endure it any longer. He drew out the small purse containing O’Neill’s money, and half amused, half angry, flung it to him on the table, exclaiming: ‘Count it, and see that it is all right. From this night forward, I shall have nothing more to do with your money, or with you.’

O'Neill saw that Butler was offended with him. He knew that he had given him reason. He felt that Butler must despise him for his weakness in going out with these men, yet he could not resist. He resolved, therefore, upon a compromise, but in all such cases, compromise is fatal.

'I will prove to him,' he thought, 'that I am not altogether hopeless. I do despise these fellows, and I despise myself for being influenced by them. I will shake them off this very night, and the moment I find their attention off me, leave them.'

Full of this resolution he approached his friend.

'Butler, have you ever known me to break my word?'

'No! I do not know that I have,' answered Butler, astonished at the question.

'What o'clock is it now?'

'It has just struck eight, College time.'

'Then I shall be with you to-night before eleven. See if I don't.'

‘Oh, do not hurry yourself on my account, I beg of you. You will be with your friends.’

‘I see by your face what you think of me. But I shall leave them in two hours, and never go out with them again while I live.’

Butler’s answer was a contemptuous, incredulous smile.

‘I shall be with you to-night, before eleven o’clock. Wait in for me.’

‘I shall be in my room. I am not going out. In the meantime, I shall take this volume of Alford. I have not seen it before.’

And singing, and laughing, and smoking, the “Jokers” trooped out in a body.

Butler, carrying the precious volume of Alford with him, returned to his room. He boiled the kettle, and made some tea. Then he heaped fresh coals on the fire, swept the ashes from the hearth, trimmed his lamp, drew the curtains close, and, seated in his arm-chair, prepared for a long and comfortable read. How pleasant it is to sit by the fire with a new volume in your hand, cutting the leaves as you

turn them over! It was now raining, and as the storm beat against the window, it made Butler feel the more cosy and comfortable in his room.

He was soon deeply engaged in the pages containing the result of Dean Alford's exhaustive and laborious scholarship. He thought how Dr. Young would gloat over such a work, and resolved to take him a copy when he next went home.

The College clock was just beginning to strike eleven as O'Neill knocked at the door.

'Now,' he cried, as Butler let him in, 'have I not kept my word? Here I am: and before eleven, too. I got away from the fellows just in time. I have spent my last night with the "Jokers."

'How wet you are? Does it rain yet? Why, the water is streaming from you! Take off your hat and coat,' said Butler, rather surprised to see him.

'Raining! It's coming down in sheets: never saw such rain: it has been pouring these two

hours: the streets are all flooded: I have been standing outside in it the last ten minutes watching the lightning: and now I am thoroughly saturated; I am drenched to the skin.'

'That was a foolish, dangerous thing to do. You should change your clothes instantly, or it may be the death of you.'

'No fear of me. I am too tough. I thought it might cool me; but I feel hotter than ever. I saw that cat again as I came upstairs; the brute!'

'Where have you been? How did you get rid of the others? I wonder they let you off,' Butler remarked.

'We went to the "Shades" first. I refused to drink, and there was a row. I had only two grogs all the evening. Now I feel as if I could drink the Shannon dry. Then we went to that exhibition in D'Olier Street—beastly affair it is. Then they all went off to the Agapemone. I went with them to the door, but refused to go in. The rain was coming down so fast they could not stay outside to argue with

me, and then I walked back. The lightning is sublime.'

'I will not hear another word,' interrupted Butler. 'Come, off with your things, and go to bed. You are shivering and trembling already. After such a drenching, a glass of hot, stiff punch will do you no harm. Fortunately, I have as much pale brandy as will make one. Into your room at once, and strip, while I boil the water.'

And in a few minutes afterwards Butler gave him the brandy punch in bed, and bade him good-night.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

TOM BUTLER had not risen the next morning, but after a restless night was dozing dreamily when Wicks, peering into his bedroom, mumbled rather than spoke,—

‘As soon as you’re up, Mr. O’Neill wants to speak to you, sir.’

‘Wants to speak to me,’ said Tom, ‘what for?’

‘I don’t know, sir. He bid me ask you to come to him.’ And keeping the door open, and putting his head a little farther in, he added: ‘When I went into his room awhile ago to make his fire, I found him sitting undressed at the table writing, and he flushed all over. I don’t think he can be very well, sir, for he was shaking and trembling as if he had the ague.’

Tom was up and dressed in a few minutes, and in O'Neill's room. A single glance was sufficient to show him that he was seriously ill. His face was crimson, his lips parched, his skin burningly hot and dry, and his pulse was beating furiously.


'Why, O'Neill, old fellow, how is this? What's the matter with you?'

'I don't know. I feel so strange. My head is on fire—oh, such dreadful pains. I tremble so; my tongue is like a lump of red-hot ashes. I am as thirsty as a million fishes, and I say, do give me something to drink.'

Tom opened a bottle of soda water and gave it to him.

'Now listen,' said O'Neill, as he clutched the glass, 'and you'll hear this hissing as it goes down my throat, as if it were going over red-hot iron.'

But the dreadful thirst was not to be so assuaged, and the eyes that looked into Tom's, as he gave him back the empty glass, were heavy and lustreless.



‘I think,’ said Tom, ‘a cup of tea will do you good. There, be quiet now. Why did you not call me sooner?’

‘I did not like to,’ O’Neill replied. ‘I have been awake tossing and tumbling, unable to sleep all night. And that black cat has been on the bed, and I hunted the brute into the other room, but could not get rid of him. And, by Jove,’ he added, suddenly raising himself on his elbow, and pointing to the door, ‘there he is again.’

Tom turned round involuntarily, but of course no cat was there. It existed only in the sick man’s disordered brain.

‘Lie down now,’ said Tom, soothingly, and he laid his hand gently on the fevered brow. ‘I’ll take care of the cat. And I am going to take care of you. You are very ill, I fear.’

‘Yes! I am in for it at last. Oh, my head! my head!’ moaned the sufferer.

‘I thought you would be, and told you so. But let that pass. You are at this moment in

a state of high fever, so I'll take off these bed-clothes, and leave you only the sheet. You have a violent headache, so I'll throw up these windows to let in the cool air: for the same reason, I pull down these blinds to exclude the light. I'll get you a cup of tea in a jiffy—nothing like tea for a headache, you know, and then I'll send Wicks for the doctor, and,' but this to himself, 'you are right—you are in for it, and no mistake.'

'I say, Butler, what a regular brick you are!—you are about the best fellow in the world, I do think,' exclaimed the invalid. 'I want you to promise me two things.'

'What are they?' said Tom.

'Will you promise?'

'I will.'

'If I should be really very ill, promise me that you will not allow them to shave my head, and that you will not let them know at home that I am sick.'

'Yes. I promise—that is, unless I am obliged. The doctor and circumstances may

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be too strong for me,' said Tom, as he quietly arranged the dressing-table and put the room to rights. 'I'll do what I can.'

Tom was far more alarmed at his friend's condition than he appeared to be to him. While making the tea he was in doubt as to the real nature of his illness. The black cat said plainly enough *delirium tremens*, but the dry, hot skin, and bounding pulse indicated fever.'

'What doctor shall I call in?' he thought. 'Crampton knows his family and will be sure to tell them. I must not get an entire stranger. Stop. I have it. Power is the man. O'Neill was at a party at his house last term, and knows him, and, besides, he is famous in fever cases. So here goes,' and, sitting down, he wrote the following note:—

"30, Trinity College, Thursday.

"SIR,

"I regret to say that my friend, Mr. O'Neill, has been taken suddenly ill; I fear of fever. I shall be obliged if you will call to

see him at your earliest convenience. I write this note in his rooms, where I shall wait all day to receive you.

“I remain, sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“T. STEAD BUTLER.

“To DR. POWER.”

Having folded and addressed the letter, he called the skip.

‘Now, Wicks, take this note at once to Dr. Power’s, of Stephen’s Green; I forget the number, but it’s only a few doors from Harcourt Street; anyone will tell you. See himself, if you possibly can. Wait—on your way back call at a fishmonger’s for two or three pounds of ice, and look sharp. Till the doctor comes,’ he thought, ‘some ice to his temples can do him no harm; it may help to lessen the fever.’

The skip soon returned with the ice, and the welcome news that the physician would call early in the afternoon.

‘I saw the doctor myself, sir,’ said Wicks; ‘he read your letter. “How long has this gentleman been sick?” says he to me. “Since morning, yer honour,” says I. “What is the matter with him?” says he. “I don’t know, sir,” says I. “Very well,” says he. “My compliments to Mr. Butler, and tell him that I’ll call between one and two o’clock to-day.” He is a great doctor intirely, sir. There was a crowd of people in a room off the hall waiting to see him.’

In spite of all Tom’s care and attention, O’Neill grew rapidly worse. The thirst increased, the pulse beat more rapidly, the head rolled more heavily from side to side on the pillow, the eyes closed wearily, the hot breath—hot as if it came from a furnace—was more quickly respired, the hands fidgeted restlessly with the sheet, the parched lips muttered incoherent sentences, and when, in the afternoon, Dr. Power’s brougham, drawn by a pair of spanking bays, dashed across the College square, the patient was delirious. Tom was

anxiously waiting the doctor's arrival, and, before he could knock, had opened the door. He glided noiselessly into the room—a tall, stately old gentleman with white hair, bushy eyebrows, bright hazel eyes, pale intellectual face, and a mouth puckered with kindness and good humour.

‘Mr. Butler, from whom I had the note this morning, I presume,’ said the doctor, bowing courteously to Tom.

Tom bowed low in return.

‘Sorry I am so late,’ continued the doctor; ‘I meant to call earlier, but we had a dangerous case of amputation at the hospital, which, with other things, delayed me; and now, how is your friend?’

‘I fear he is worse, doctor,’ said Tom, leading the way into the sick room.

The examination was soon made. The doctor's gold repeater was in one hand, the patient's wrist in the fingers of the other: pulse one hundred and twenty; tongue foul; the soft, white hand was placed on the throb-

ing temples, then on the breast, and then the doctor put down his ear to listen to the labouring, beating heart—result, fever.

The doctor scanned the room, and looked at Tom approvingly. ‘Only a sheet on, right; windows open, good; door must be kept open also, cannot have too much air, and he is out of the draught here; ice on head, good again; saline draught (taking up the bottle), nothing could be better;’ and, having completed his survey, the doctor beckoned Tom into the next room. ‘Typhus fever,’ said the former, tapping his snuff-box, and helping himself to a pinch of Lundy’s best; ‘the whole nervous system, too, from some cause or other, is terribly shattered. How long has he been ill?’

‘Only since morning, or rather last night,’ Tom answered.

‘Only since morning, so much the worse. He is delirious already—Does he drink?’

Tom was obliged to admit that he did drink.

‘Habitually?’

‘Well, yes,’ he could not deny that either.

‘Hem! been leading a fast life, generally? Burning the candle at both ends, eh?’

That also was true. Tom was anxious to screen his friend as much as possible, but he could not conceal the truth. ‘The fact is, doctor,’ he said, ‘my poor friend got in with a fast lot of men. He means well, knows that he is doing wrong, but he has not strength of will to resist the excitements and temptations that surround him. But he is the gentlest, kindest, most amiable fellow in the world. He has only the one fault. If you only knew him, you would love him.’

‘I understand,’ the doctor said, ‘’tis the old story. Means well, but does wrong. Has only one fault, but that fault is fatal. The road to a certain place is paved with good intentions. That’s about the result. Is it not?’

‘I fear so. Yet ’tis such a pity, doctor, for my friend has genius.’

‘Genius! that’s a high word, not to be lightly used. Talent he may have.’

‘I am sure of it,’ added Tom, warmly; ‘he

has genius,—poetical genius, and of a very high order too. If he lives, he will yet make a name.'

'Worse and worse, he is the more to blame. Nature has given him a fine constitution, and you say genius, yet he wastes the one, and tries to destroy, I fear has destroyed, the other. What fools you young men are!'

'You think there is danger, then?'

'I do. He has youth on his side, to be sure, but there is little vitality left. Drinking has ruined that,' and the doctor sat down and wrote rapidly on a sheet of note paper. 'Here, send this prescription to the chemist's at once, and now the first two things to be done are: get his head shaved, and write to inform his friends.'

'The very things he made me promise this morning I would not do,' said Tom.

'Made you promise! How is that?' asked the doctor in surprise.

'Why,' said Tom, 'he has a morbid dread of a razor touching his head. I have seen him

shudder at the very sound of the words "a crown-shaven monk."

'Cut off his hair short then, and apply more bags of ice; it may not be necessary to shave his head unless we have to apply leeches. But his friends must know, he cannot be left without attendance,' the doctor said.

'I will attend him myself,' rejoined Tom; 'with the help of a nurse we shall do very well. I do not see the use of alarming his family just yet.'

'As you please. The fever is infectious, remember. You may catch it.'

'I am not afraid of infection. My father was a doctor,' answered Tom, proudly.

'Indeed! Bravely said,' echoed the doctor, 'What part of the country are you from?'

'Queen's County, doctor; my father knew you well. I have often heard him say he walked the hospitals with you.'

'What, Tom Butler of Ossory? Why, we were students together.'

'The same,' said Tom.

‘God bless my soul!’ said the doctor, seizing Tom’s hand. ‘Are you Tom Butler’s son? Is it possible? Give me your other hand. My dear boy, your father and I were old friends, we lived in the same house and studied together for years. How stupid of me not to recognise you before. Now that I look at you again you are very like him. Dear me! seems like yesterday. What a world it is, to be sure; poor Tom Butler’s son!’ all the time shaking Tom’s hands.

Tom was delighted with the old doctor’s warm remembrances of his father, and his heightened colour showed it.

‘To think,’ went on the doctor, ‘that I did not know Tom Butler’s son. That is the way of the world. Its cares, and anxieties, and ambitions absorb all our time and attention. We get selfish, and lose sight of our early friends, or grow indifferent to them. We went our different ways, but although, somehow, I lost sight of your father, I have not forgotten him. Young man, you cannot do better than follow

your father's example. He was as true a friend and brave a gentleman as ever lived.'

At these words Tom's eyes filled with tears. They were tears of sorrow, and yet they were tears of joy.

'How many years since he'—here the doctor paused, as if unwilling to complete the question.

'Eleven,' said Tom, at once comprehending him; 'he died a couple of years before the famine began.'

'Ah, that was a fatal time for the members of the profession. I was down with typhus myself, but pulled through. What family did your father leave?'

'Three—a brother, a sister, and myself. My sister died since of consumption.'

'Your mother still living?'

'Yes, thank God,' was the fervent reply.

'Give me your hand again. I like the tones of your voice. 'Tis one of my infallible tests of character. Other criteria—eyes, nose, mouth, head, all err, the voice never. Your

poor father used to rally me upon this weakness, which he called my "mania vox," but it has never yet deceived me. Put me into a dark room, and bandage my eyes, and let me listen to the tones of a man's voice for five minutes, and I will tell you the man's character to a T.'

'I never heard that theory before,' said Tom.

'Very likely, but I believe in it. Like all old men, I grow garrulous. I have patients waiting to see me yet, and must be off. Before I go, however, let me say one word. If ever you are in a difficulty of any kind come to me. I must see more of you. I give you *carte blanche*. Make my house at all times your home, and under all circumstances remember, that for your poor father's sake you may always rely upon having a friend in Ben Power; and now, my dear boy, God bless you.'

The doctor was half way down the stairs when he came back again, and opening a small

silver box, gave Tom two small pieces of sponge, steeped in a fragrant preparation of vinegar.

‘As you seem determined to risk your own life—for it amounts to that—to save that of your worthless, drunken friend, we must take all reasonable precautions against danger. Put these bits of sponge in your nostrils, and keep them there; close your lips while in the sick room; keep doors and windows open; put some disinfecting fluid, which I will send you, in saucers on the floor;’ saying which the doctor vanished, and Tom was left alone with his sick friend.

‘Now, Mr. Butler,’ said Tom, apostrophizing himself, as he walked over to the glass on the mantelpiece, and tried to fix the fragrant sponge plugs in his nostrils—which operation caused him to gasp, wrinkle up his nose, and made him sneeze incontinently,—‘Now, Mr. Butler, what do you think of yourself and of your day’s work? Supposing you kept a diary—which, thank Heaven, you don’t—what

would you say of this day's history, or how would you describe its events?

‘Let me see. I should say first, that I had made the acquaintance of an old friend of my dear father's; that I liked him very much indeed, as a kind, shrewd, genial old gentleman with a clear head and a large heart; a thorough master of his profession, holding perhaps a crotchet or two, but true as steel, and sound to the core.

‘Next, that all my predictions about O'Neill have been unfortunately verified. That I found him this morning ill of fever; had undertaken to nurse him through it; had promised to keep his illness a secret from his “Implacable Sire” (what if he should die on my hands? That would be a nice kettle o' fish); that I had dictated to the famous Dr. Power how he should treat his patient; that I boasted I was not afraid of infection. Was that true? I think so. I do not think I am afraid. But what if I should catch the fever and die of it? (Then all my doubts and perplexities would

be set at rest. I should at least learn the great secret.) What would the fond, foolish old mother at home say and do? and what would become of that doting brother of mine, who would no longer have an idle, lazy, worthless fellow like me to lavish all his unselfish care and priceless affection upon?—for, Tom, you are an idle, lazy, dreaming dog of great promise and mean performance, utterly unworthy of all the love centred on you, a burden on those to whom you should be a support; and when I try to form an impartial opinion, and strike a just balance, upon my word, Master Tom, I cannot say that you are improving.'

The entrance of Wicks with the medicines put an end to this soliloquy, and recalled Tom to his self-imposed duties.

'Now, Wicks,' said Tom, addressing that individual, 'Mr. O'Neill has got the fever—'

'Blood alive! No, sir,' cried Wicks, alarmed, and turning very pale.

'Yes, he has,' said Tom; 'and what's more,

it's infectious,—typhus fever; the doctor says so. I only think it fair to tell you, because, if you are afraid to attend here as usual I shall get some one else.'

'I am a little afeard of the fever, sir,' returned Wicks, making a desperate effort to look calm; 'but I'll come as usual to make the fire, bring water, and do up the rooms.'

'That's all I shall expect you to do,' answered Tom. 'I am going to attend Mr. O'Neill myself, and I want you to get a nurse to help me.'

'Attend him yourself, sir!' said Wicks, opening his eyes with astonishment.

'Certainly,' said Tom, 'I cannot leave him here to die without assistance.'

'Oh! for the love of the Blessed Virgin, Mr. Butler, don't think of such a thing. Shure, Mr. Butler, yer honour, it's as much as your life is worth.' added Wicks.

'I suppose it is, Wicks; what of that? Can you get me a nurse?'

'Shurely, from the hospital I can, sir. The

doctor will send you half-a-dozen of 'em, if you like. They're as plentiful as blackberries.'

'No, no, Wicks, I have heard enough from the medical students to know what the hospital nurses are like. They are nearly all drunkards; and I would not trust the life of a cat to their care, much less the life of Mr. O'Neill. I want you to get me some clean decent woman, accustomed to a sick room. I shall pay her well for the trouble she takes and the risk she runs.'

'I tell you what, Mr. Butler, I'll ask Kit, my own wife, if she will come.'

'She may be afraid, like yourself,' said Tom, 'and refuse to come.'

'What, Kit afeard! O the devil a-fear! She'd walk through a churchyard in the middle of the night without turning a hair; and, although she has the gift of second-sight, she snaps her fingers at all the banshees and fairies and ghosts in Munster. Afeard, indeed; not she. Is it Kit? Afeard, inagh.'

'Why not let her come at once, then?' inquired Tom.

‘Well, you see, Mr. Butler, she’s mighty proud in herself, intirely, although she is the wife of a poor man—as she often and often reminds me—still she has the rale ould blood in her vains, being one of the O’Briens of Limerick, who were kings of Munster long ago; and she is consated accordingly. Only last week she says to me, “You poor mane spalpeen,” she says, “who were you before I lowered myself by taking up with your name, which is good enough for a chandler’s shop, but not fit for one of the Munster O’Briens?” And then she tossed her head, like a queen.’

‘Ask her to step round to me this evening,’ said Tom. ‘I think I can manage her.’

‘I will, yer honour. Only tip her a little of the blarney about the O’Briens, and I’ll be bound she’d go through fire and water for you. If she’ll only keep from the whisky, she’ll do.’

‘Is she fond of the bottle?’ asked Tom, amused at the ludicrous dignity of this female descendant of the blood-royal of Tara.

‘Whisht, yer honour!’ cried Wicks, with a gesture of alarm; ‘she might be outside listening.’ Then, lowering his voice to a whisper, he added, ‘Well, sir, I’ll not deny it, she is fond of a dhrop, she is; I admit it; and it’s when she has the dhrop in, she’s rampant about the O’Briens.’

‘In that case, she will not suit at all,’ said Tom. ‘There is no use in asking her.’

‘Yes, sir, she will,’ said Wicks, earnestly; ‘only allowance her: put her on her honour, Mr. Butler, not to take too much, and don’t lave the bottle where she can get at it, and she’ll keep sober as a judge. Give her only two or three glasses of a night, and you won’t see a wink on her. Not a wink. She has a fine strong head of her own to bear it.’

‘Then on your recommendation I’ll try her,’ said Tom, half doubtingly.

‘Thank you, sir. Long life to yer honour. But, Mr. Butler, for the love of Heaven, don’t let her know that I split on her. She’d never forgive me. A nice dance she leads me now,

making free with her rolling-pins and brush handles; rushing for the poker, too, in her tantrums. But, Lord bless yer honour, if she only knew I said a word about her wakeness, I couldn't live with her at all, at all.'

'Make your mind easy on that point; I shall not betray you,' said Tom, laughing at the skip's evident trepidation. 'Now, let us get to work at once; we have much to do. Fetch in the arm-chair from my room, and put it beside Mr. O'Neill's bed. That pantry there is all a heap of dust and lumber; tidy it up. Pack away these empty bottles in that hamper. And clean me a saucepan or two, I shall want them to make whey and broth. There are scarcely any coals, either; order some in this evening; and sweep this carpet, and dust the room while I am out. I was quite ashamed for the doctor to see the dirty state everything was in. The fender and grate are filthy; get the blacklead brushes, and polish them up a bit.'

Wicks was galvanized into momentary

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energy by Tom's voice and manner. He felt that under the inspection of that sharp, vigilant eye there could be no shirking; and, although he did not half like it, did his work accordingly. After a couple of hours' scrubbing and sweeping and dusting, the rooms assumed a new aspect, and looked moderately bright and clean. Duster in hand, Tom followed the perspiring skip, hunting out the dust the latter had missed on the furniture, to the intense chagrin and annoyance of Mr. Wicks.

CHAPTER XV.

THE JOKERS.

THEY were thus busily engaged when they heard a babel of voices under the window clamouring for O'Neill.

'Tally-ho!' 'An O'Neill, an O'Neill to the rescue.' 'The Red Hand for ever.' 'Are you there, Bob? Come along, old boy,' were the mingled cries that met Tom's ear. Looking out he saw half-a-dozen of the "Jokers" on the pavement below, on their way to the dining-hall, and waiting for O'Neill to accompany them.

'Hush!' said Tom, putting up his hand. 'Make no noise. You are more like a lot of howling dervishes than rational beings.'

A peal of derisive laughter greeted Tom's comparison.

'I tell you to be quiet,' he cried, in a sup-

pressed voice, 'unless you are savages and not men. O'Neill is very ill in bed. The doctor only left him an hour ago.'

'What's the matter with him?' cried several voices at once.

'Fever—typhus fever, is the matter with him, and unless you wish to get it, I advise you to give these rooms a wide berth, front and rear,' answered Tom.

'Are you serious, or are you joking?' asked Gleeson, with a scared look.

'I never was more serious in my life. I told you all last night he was unwell, and you would not believe it. You insisted on taking him out with you against his will. He left you fellows early and came in through the pouring rain, drenched to the skin, and now he is raving deliriously. That's what your taking him out last night did for him. He has you to thank for the state he is in,' said Tom.

Had a bombshell exploded amongst them, they could not have been more alarmed. As it was the news was so sudden, so

unexpected, some of them could not believe it. Butler's manner, however, was too grave to leave any room for doubt.

'Poor fellow,' said one. 'I'm sorry for him,' muttered a second. 'By George! this is serious,' cried a third, and they looked at each other with blank faces.

'I suppose,' said Tom, 'none of you are coming up to see him?' There was no answer. 'Very well,' he added, looking scornfully at them. 'He is unconscious and would not know you if you did, but as you are all such friends of his'—with sarcastic emphasis on the word—'I thought you might like to see him. As you do not, will you tell the other fellows at commons that he is ill? It may keep them from whooping in Botany to-night.' [The square on which O'Neill's bedroom window looked out is called in College, "Botany Bay."] 'You need not be afraid of doing that.'

'Yes! Yes!' they answered, 'we will tell the others,' and they departed.

'I thought so,' said Tom to himself. 'Not

one of them volunteered to help me, or even asked if there was anyone to look after him. "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. There are no bands even in their death." "

In the meanwhile O'Neill lay tossing restlessly on his bed of pain. He had been raving in the afternoon, with occasional intervals of consciousness. In one of these intervals Tom approached the bed, scissors in hand.

'How do you feel now?' he asked.

'Bad, bad; oh my head, my head, can you give me nothing to quench this fiery thirst?'

'I have been giving you cooling drinks all day,' said Tom.

'Have you?' he feebly inquired. 'I do not remember.'

'You see you are not quite yourself,' said Tom. 'The doctor has been here. He says you must lose your hair, and wanted to have the razor used, but I objected, and am now going to clip it,' and suiting the action to the word, he began quickly to shear off the masses of auburn hair, cutting it close to the scalp.

The sick man made no objection, and in a few minutes the task was dexterously completed, the hair carefully folded up in paper, and placed away in a drawer.

‘If the girls want hair, glossy as silk, of an auburn colour and unlimited in quantity, now is their time,’ said Tom, cheerily. ‘Apply personally, at No. 30, Trinity College, Dublin. Now, ladies! Now is your time. Such an opportunity may never occur again.’

Ill as O’Neill was, he smiled faintly at Tom’s auctioneering speech.

‘It does not improve’ one’s personal appearance, I suppose?’ he asked Tom.

‘No;’ said Tom, ‘I can’t say it does, but comfort first, appearances afterwards. This nice bag of pounded ice will cool your head and lessen the pain. There—I declare the very look of it makes myself feel cool and comfortable. Now I have some nice whey ready for you to quench your thirst,’ and just at that moment he heard Mrs. Wicks, *née* O’Brien, enter the other room.

Mrs. Wicks' personal appearance could not be taken as a proof positive of her direct descent from the great hero of Clontarf. Brian Boru was a Celt, it is to be supposed, with dark eyes, and dark hair, after the true Celtic type; whereas Mrs. Wicks' eyes were of a light colour, of a greenish hue, like a boiled gooseberry. Her hair was of a flaming red, so red that an observer would not be surprised if at any moment it burst into a blaze, and fizzled into ashes.

The figure of Mrs. Wicks was tall and commanding, but bony and angular. The good lady was what is called cock-eyed, which some people thought gave her rather a sinister look. Her face was covered over with large brown freckles, and her complexion was so muddy and greasy that no quantity of soap and water, and no amount of scrubbing, could make it look clear and clean. She had a large wart on the side of her nose, two eye-teeth, that came out like fangs on her lower lip, while the upper lip was shaded with a thick, short, red moustache ;

and her hands and feet were large, and not particularly indicative of gentle blood. A dark cotton dress, a red woollen shawl, and an old black and white straw bonnet, tied with faded black silk ribbon, completed Mrs. Wicks' unpretending toilet.

Such was the grim figure which met Tom's gaze, and on which he looked with astonishment, approaching to horror. 'No wonder,' he mentally exclaimed, 'that little Wicks is afraid of such an Amazon as this.' Tom was constitutionally brave, and stood prepared for the probable collision with his formidable visitor. Mrs. Wicks was the first to speak.

'Wicks told me to call upon you, sir,' said that lady, in a deep sepulchral voice, hollow as if it came from a beer barrel.

'So I did, Mrs. Wicks,' answered Tom. 'Please to take a chair.'

The descendant of Brian Boru seated herself on the very edge of the chair nearest the door : she sat bolt upright ; spread out her large hands defiantly on her knees ; looked fiercely

at Tom, and her whole attitude seemed to say, 'Don't attempt to trifle with me! I know what is due to my own dignity, and am determined to maintain it.'

'You are aware, I suppose,' Tom continued, 'that Mr. O'Neill is very ill.'

'Yes,' she grunted; she was quite aware of that. It was nothing new to *her*.

'And I want some careful, sober person to help me to take care of him, until he gets well again. I do not care to employ a regular nurse; I have not a very high opinion of that class of persons; they are not to be trusted in a matter of life and death like this; and Wicks thought that perhaps you would be kind enough to afford me the assistance I require,' Tom said.

At the word sober, Mrs. Wicks moved uneasily on her chair, and her cock-eye glared with angry light at Tom, but his concluding sentences appeased her wrath; for they inferred that she was quite a superior person, who could be trusted to an illimitable extent.

'Well sir,' said the sepulchral voice, 'going

out a-nursing is not in my line. My family is not accustomed to it because of having seen better days; although I had the misfortune to allow that little craythur of a Wicks to put his come'd'her on me.' (Now, if report spoke truly, Mrs. Wicks had put her come'd'her on Mr. Wicks; had taken him to chapel by the collar of his coat, and married him by sheer force, he loudly protesting against it all the time.) 'My mother being an O'Brien, of the county of Limerick, Mr. Butler, which the Butlers, too, are of the rale ould stock; yet as the gentleman is sick, and I don't wish to be fractious, may I be bould enough humbly to ask what you want me to do?'

'Certainly, Mrs. Wicks; nothing can be more reasonable. I only ask you to watch by the bedside of Mr. O'Neill; give him his medicines at the appointed times, and keep things straight generally, in all of which I shall be too glad to assist you. My friend is an O'Neill, Mrs. Wicks, and you are an O'Brien; and the O'Neills and O'Briens are two of

the greatest and most ancient families in the land.'

'The O'Neills are not bad,' growled the sepulchral voice, 'but they're not the equals of the O'Briens. Don't think it.'

'I quite agree with you there, Mrs. Wicks. The O'Briens are the oldest and most royal family in Ireland. Who leathered the Danes at Clontarf I should like to know?' asked Tom, triumphantly, 'but the O'Briens? It was King Brian Boru gave them the final blow.'

The last shot hit the mark in the centre. Mrs. Wicks was as completely vanquished by it as the Danes were by her royal ancestor.

'You are right, sir,' again sounded the deep hollow voice, 'and a gentleman; I will say that; and it's no shame or disgrace any day for an O'Brien to help an O'Neill.'

Tom was a little alarmed at his own success. He did not know what to make of the terribly whose aid he had summoned. However, it was now too late to think of looking for help

elsewhere. He resolved, therefore, to try how she would conduct herself that night, if she did not please him he could easily dismiss her, and find some one else on the morrow.

‘I have not much to offer you in the way of refreshments to-night Mrs. Wicks. I was so much engaged all day I had no time to think of such matters. To-morrow we shall do better, but I can give you a glass of whisky-punch. Will you have one? It will brighten you up for the night.’

Yes! Mrs. Wicks would have a glass of punch. She was never yet known to refuse such a thing, and Tom placed the steaming tumbler before her, hot, strong, and sweet. Mrs. Wicks, still preserving her dignity, imbibed the pleasant beverage, although with every sip lamenting over the fallen condition of the O’Briens.

It should be stated in this narrative, that Mrs. Wicks before entering the College gates that evening, and ignorant of the reception that might await her, and of the entertainment

provided for her especial benefit, had deemed it only a matter of common prudence, and as an act of justice to herself, to repair to a familiar hostelry in Trinity Street, in which orthodox locality was a well-known 'Public,' where Jameson's best whisky was made into punch, and there had fortified herself against all contingencies by partaking of three flowing glasses of the famous brew, in order that in her proper person the honour of the O'Brien family might suffer no detriment.

This will serve to explain the fact of her warlike attitude towards Tom, and her readiness to do battle on the family clan behoof, until mollified by his affecting allusion to Clontarf. With her appetite whetted rather than sated by the Trinity Street libations, she now gratefully partook of Tom's concoction, admitting as she drank it, that it beat the former hollow. Having at length finished her pleasant task, she laid aside her bonnet and shawl, and was ready for the duty of the night.

‘I am glad to hear,’ said Tom, ‘that you are not afraid of the fever.’

‘Afeard!’ she replied, ‘why should I be?’

‘Wicks told me you would not be,’ Tom answered.

‘Wicks! Oh the coward,’ rejoined his spouse; ‘he is afeard of his shadow.’

‘He evidently admires you very much, and stands in awe of you,’ said Tom.

‘He! the contemptible little hop-o’-my-thumb of a ninny-hammer. He admire! He dare to admire an O’Brien from Munster! I’d wring his neck,’ said his amiable partner.

Tom saw that he was treading on dangerous ground, and hastened to change the current of her thoughts by giving her instructions about her patient.

‘It’s now past eleven o’clock,’ said Tom. ‘At twelve precisely give Mr. O’Neill,’ pointing to the bed, ‘two table-spoonfuls of this mixture. Here is some whey, and also a jug of toast-and-water, in case he should want a drink. Renew the ice to his head occasionally. You can rest

in that arm-chair. Keep the door and windows open as they are. I'll lie down on the sofa in the next room; here is my watch, you can call me at four o'clock, when I will relieve you.' To all these arrangements Mrs. Wicks growled assent.

It was almost midnight when Tom came back from his own chambers, gave another look at his fever-stricken friend; again repeated his directions to Mrs. Wicks; took off his coat, and lying down on the sofa in O'Neill's sitting-room sought a few hours' rest.

He was just falling asleep when he was aroused by an extraordinary noise in the next room. Starting from the sofa, he went in and found Mrs. Wicks fast asleep, and snoring in a way that might awake the dead, while O'Neill was sitting up in bed, looking at her with undisguised terror in his face. Mrs. Wicks not merely snored, she emitted sounds the like of which Tom had never heard before—a series of loud snorts as if a steam-engine were puffing and blowing at a

load too heavy for its strength, and unable to move.

After repeated shakings Tom succeeded in awaking her. She rose in great wrath and demanded to know what he meant, and why an O'Brien should be insulted in that manner. Tom pacified her by giving her more whisky, and told her she might lie down in the pantry or lumber room, he would sit up the remainder of the night himself. He closed the door on her there. There was no more sleep that night for Tom, who sat in the arm-chair watching the countenance of O'Neill.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FIGHT WITH DEATH.

WITH a fierce and deadly grip the fever had seized upon its victim. In a spirit of grim determination to take the fortress, the fell disease completed his lines of circumvallation, and occupied all the avenues by which help might come to the besieged. The beleaguered garrison, already weakened by the treacherous ally—alcohol, gave signs of capitulation, and had only one hope of resistance left—youth. So that when Tom entered the lists to fight the battle against death, he had little chance of victory. The odds were heavy against him. A less heroic spirit would have given up the contest in despair, but Tom was possessed of one of those unconquerable souls that compel success by never acknowledging defeat. Day by day and hour by hour he fought the enemy

with unflagging determination. No advantage was given on either side. Mine was met and baffled by counter mine, stratagem by stratagem, assault was repulsed by sortie, and when the twelfth day had elapsed, it left the contest yet uncertain.

When Mrs. Wicks so signally failed Tom, the first night of O'Neill's illness, he found an unexpected and valuable assistant in Mrs. Mahony, his milkwoman. She was a little, frail, delicate creature, with whom fortune had dealt harshly. Something unmistakeable in her clear complexion, bright eyes, and grey hair spoke of other and better days, while her threadbare dress, clean starched cap, and snowy apron, seemed a kind of protest against the poverty that had fallen to her lot.

Her afflictions had been many and grievous. She had lost both husband and children, and was now alone in the world with no one but a sick, bed-ridden boy to provide for. By knitting stockings, and retailing milk amongst the students, she managed to eke out a poor

and precarious livelihood for both. Tom had learned her history, and pitied her misfortunes. He had assisted her, too, on some occasions with small loans of money, which she had honestly repaid, and besides, felt towards her benefactor the liveliest gratitude. Going her rounds in the morning Tom told her the situation, and asked her what she could do to help him.

‘No, sir, I don’t know of a nurse then, not one,’ she said, in answer to Tom’s inquiry; ‘unless I come and help myself. I’ll come with thanks, sir, if you let me.’

‘The very thing,’ said Tom. ‘How stupid of me not to think of it before! But are you sure you can spare the time?’

‘Quite sure, your honour; a couple of hours in the morning, and an hour in the evening, will enable me to supply my customers, and then I’ll be free for the rest of the day. One of the neighbours will look after the child for me at home.’

‘Capital,’ said Tom. ‘Nothing could be better. Make haste on your rounds now. I

will have breakfast ready by the time you come back. And you know, Mrs. Mahony, in this case we shall not take your time for nothing.'

'Don't speak of that, sir. It's not payment I'm thinking of. I am sorry that I can do so little to prove how grateful I am for all your honour's kindness to me.'

'Tut, tut,' answered Tom, 'you make too much of trifles. If we can save Mr. O'Neill's life, that will be something worth talking of.'

'That we will, sir, with the blessing of God. It's all in his hands,' Mrs. Mahony replied.

Mrs. Wicks being deposed, Mrs. Mahony reigned in her stead. Tom saw with delight that he had got the right person at last. She moved noiselessly about in the performance of her new duties. Under her hands everything took shape and order. The rooms soon assumed a brighter and tidier look. She did not require to be told of the sick man's wants. She anticipated them. With what a gentle touch she arranged the bedclothes! How

skilfully she prepared and administered the sufferer's drinks, and how deftly she applied the ice to the fevered and burning head !

The very look of the bright, cheerful face, and the low tones of the subdued voice, formed a marked contrast to Mrs. Wicks' presence, and filled Tom with confidence and hope. She never seemed to sleep. No matter at what hour of the night he went into the sick room he found her wakeful and attentive.

'If I had searched all Dublin,' thought Tom, 'I could not have found as good or skilful a nurse.'

Every morning and evening Dr. Power called. His first diagnosis proved to be correct : for the disease soon became more pronounced.

'It is now a contest between life and death. We can do nothing more than stand by and see fair play,' said the doctor. 'The fever will run its course in spite of us. People talk of doctors as if they could cure diseases. We cannot. Nature is the great Physician. All we can do is, to remove obstructions out of her path.'

The acquaintance between Tom and the doctor had already ripened into friendship. The latter admired Tom's courage, and evident resources. Doctors like to have their instructions obeyed; and Tom had carried out all Doctor Power's orders to the letter. Everything was done at the right time, and in the right way. Nothing was left to chance: nothing was forgotten. Even when without specific directions, Tom seemed to divine what was right to be done. The doctor was spared the necessity of all injunctions about regimen, air, ventilation, &c., usual in such cases. And in more than one instance was surprised at the way in which his advice had been anticipated.

'Pon my word, my good friend, if you go on like this,' he said to Tom, 'I need not come here any more. It is only a waste of time. When I do come there is nothing for me to say or do. You are always beforehand with me.'

'I am so glad you approve of our proceedings, doctor,' said Tom, gaily.

'Approve! I should think so. I have been

on the look-out for something to blame, and cannot find it. If skill and care and good nursing can save anyone, your friend inside is safe.'

'I have often heard my father say good nursing was half the battle,' added Tom.

'Quite right; so it is. It is giving nature fair play. Thousands of lives are lost for want of it.'

The doctor seemed quite to enjoy his conversations with Tom. Busy as he usually was, yet he found time at each visit, for a friendly chat with the son of his old friend. It reminded him of former days, and revived the feelings of his youth.

'You do not look quite well yourself to-day,' he said one morning to Tom, who had been up all the preceding night, and was looking pale and haggard from sleeplessness and anxiety. 'Give me your wrist. Ha! low vitality. How is the tongue? Hem! I do not like those black semicircles about your eyes. You must take care.'

‘Oh, I am all right, doctor. I have not slept much of late: I only feel tired.’

‘Bad! Nothing can make up for loss of sleep. I take from eight to ten hours every night, myself. Only for it I should have been in an asylum before now.’

‘I often go to bed and never close my eyes all night,’ answered Tom.

‘Why not? What keeps you awake?’

‘Thinking, doctor; perhaps fretting. Sometimes from nervousness, I think.’

‘That will never do. It can have only one ending—an early death.’

‘I often imagine that will be the case, doctor.’

‘Nonsense! you must think nothing of the kind. Here you have been sitting up every night, losing your rest, and getting these fancies into your head. Now I order you to sit up no more. You must go to bed regularly and sleep,’ the doctor said, with emphasis.

‘I have had sleepless nights before O’Neill became ill. It’s nothing new to me.’

‘So much the worse. Yes! you are quivering all over with nerves: brain has been overworked: nervous system disordered. What do you drink?’

‘Tea, mostly,’ answered Tom; ‘and bitter beer at times.’

‘Tea I do not object to; but beer is vile stuff: it injures the liver: take no more of it. I’ll send you some old Burgundy. Drink it, and copiously. No thanks: not a word. Burgundy is the pabulum for the nerves. Drink as much as a bottle of a night. It will make you sleep, and do for the brain what the engineer does for the steam-engine, when he banks up the fires.’

‘It is a very pleasant prescription at all events,’ said Tom, laughing.

‘And as useful as it’s pleasant,’ rejoined the doctor. ‘You can try a few dozen and see how you will like it. And, now, as a friend, let me give you a few words of advice. You are a young man. Take care of your youth. I see

you are ambitious and eager for success. Take the world easy. Be not too anxious. If men only knew how little success is worth, the strife for it would not be so keen. I was once young like you, and ambitious. I am old now, and ambitious no longer.

‘Men look upon me as a successful man. What does my success amount to? What is it worth? It has brought me a superfluity of what I do not want—money, at the expense of everything else that I care for and could enjoy. I work like a horse. No rest from morning till night, and between indoor and outdoor patients, and hospitals and country calls, never have a moment that I can call my own. I get no holiday. I am passionately fond of fishing. I seldom see a stream, unless it be from the window of a railway carriage. I am, or rather was, fond of literature. I never get time to open a book, and can hardly read the newspaper. I like art. The galleries containing the great masters I never saw. I am a worshipper of Nature. My view of scenery is

mostly confined to the dirty bricks of the dirty houses of dirty Dublin.

‘I like quiet, leisure, retirement, and meditation. I am in a constant whirl of excitement from year’s end to year’s end. Sum up, then, and look at what it all comes to. Success in my case—and I dare say it’s true in many other cases too—has condemned me to a constant round of agitation, toil, and activity, that I dislike, and deprived me of all the pleasures that I could enjoy.

‘I cannot see that the balance is so much in my favour. The successful artist, lawyer, statesman, and divine are not without drawbacks that deprive their success of much of its value. Each, in some shape or other, has to pay the penalty of success; and now take care of yourself, and good-by.’

When the doctor called the next day he found O'Neill much worse. He had passed a restless night, Tom informed the doctor, and a little before dawn he and Mrs. Mahony thought he was dying. But he soon rallied.

‘How many days has he been ill?’ the doctor inquired.

‘This is the twelfth day,’ Tom answered.

‘The case is becoming critical now, and must be trifled with no longer,’ rejoined the doctor. ‘You must inform his friends at once. In fact, it should have been done before. He is very much weaker, and may get the change now at any moment.’

‘I will telegraph to his father at once,’ said Tom.

‘Send it, then, at once,’ replied the doctor. ‘I hope you have some brandy here, and get some strong beef tea or chicken broth ready. You will want them.’

‘I have the brandy,’ said Tom, ‘and the little nurse has just gone for some beef. I expected it might be required. She will be here immediately.’

‘Very good! You will have to keep a close watch on your patient. If he gets worse send for me at once, and do not spare the brandy when the change comes. And now if

you write your message I'll leave it at the office as I pass.'

'A thousand thanks! doctor,' said Tom, and he wrote as follows:

'T. STEAD BUTLER, Trinity College, Dublin.

'To Sir ARTHUR O'NEILL, Ballyluce Castle, Limerick.

'Your son Robert is dangerously ill. The doctor advises that you come to him without delay.'

'I fear it is rather startling and abrupt, but the telegraph is not favourable to circumlocutionary phrases.'

'He may be thankful if he does not get a still more startling message before long,' was the doctor's comment as he left the room.

That evening and night passed, and no change came. Tom was constantly at O'Neill's bedside. Both Tom and the nurse remained up all night watching for the dreaded symptoms which did not appear.

Shortly after daylight, Tom thought he saw

a dark shade pass across the sick man's face, accompanied with a slight convulsive spasm.

'Here, nurse,' he cried, 'quick, for the love of Heaven ; he's dying.'

In a moment the faithful nurse was at his side, and holding up the poor fevered head, while Tom poured spoonful after spoonful of brandy down O'Neill's throat, then beef tea, then brandy again, until the ghastly pallor disappeared, the leaden hue of death forsook the lips, and a faint tinge of colour touched the poor wasted, sunken cheeks, and at length the eyes opened, and Tom, by their expression, knew that they recognised him, and then, with a faint sigh, the head dropped on the pillow, and he was asleep. The battle was won, and death was robbed of his prey.

'I think the danger is now over, sir,' Mrs. Mahony whispered.

'I hope it is,' said Tom, 'but I am by no means certain. He is to be kept quiet now.'

All the morning Tom wondered he did not hear from Ballyluce Castle. Perhaps the

message had been delayed, or it might not have been delivered at all, or perchance, Sir Arthur and the family were from home. In any case, the immediate necessity for the presence of O'Neill's relatives had now passed. The crisis which Tom had feared was over. His friend was safe.

He was disturbed in the midst of these meditations by the arrival of the Telegraph boy with a message, on which was sixpence to pay. Impatiently, he tore open the flimsy envelope, and read as follows :

‘SIR ARTHUR O’NEILL, Ballyluce Castle, Limerick.

‘To T. STEAD BUTLER, Esq., Trinity College, Dublin.

‘Your message received. I am too ill to leave the house. Robert’s mother and cousin go up by the next train.’

END OF VOL. I.





